DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 239 HE 027 175

AUTHOR	Upcraft, M. Lee, Ed.; And Others
TITLE	Designing Successful Transitions: A Guide for Orienting Students to College. The Freshman Year Experience. Monograph Series Number 13.
INSTITUTION	National Orientation Directors Association.; South Carolina Univ., Columbia. National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	213p.
AVAILABLE FROM	University of South Carolina, The Freshman Year Experience, 1728 College Street, Columbia, SC 29208 ($25).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Freshmen; College Instruction; College Programs; College Role; Educational Trends; Family School Relationship; Higher Education; Program Administration; Program Design; Program Evaluation; School Holding Power; *School Orientation; Standards; Student College Relationship; Transfer Students; Transitional Programs; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*College Orientation Program; Diversity (Student); Freshman Seminars

ABSTRACT

This monograph contains 14 papers on all aspects of college and university student and family orientation programs. The papers are: (1) "Orienting Today's Students" by M. Lee Upcraft; (2) "Theoretical Perspectives on Orientation" by Michael Dannells; (3) "Trends and Issues in Orientation Programs" by Gerry Strumpf and Greg Sharer; (4) "Components of a Comprehensive Orientation Program" by Becky F. Smith and Richard Brackin; (5) "Orientation as a Catalyst: Effective Retention through Academic and Social Integration" by Louis Fox and others; (6) "Organization and Administration of Orientation Programs" by Richard H. Mullendore and Jimmy Abraham; (7) "Orienting Diverse Populations" by Bonita Jacobs; (8) "Orientation Activities for the Families of New Students" by Diane M. Austin; (9) "Meeting the Demands of Many: Orientation at Two-Year Institutions" by Les Cook and Barry Sterns; (10) "Orienting Transfer Students" by Charlene Hager Harrison; (11) "The Freshman Orientation Seminar: Extending the Benefits of Traditional Orientation" by Betsy O. Barefoot and John N. Gardner; (12) "New Student Orientation and Technology: Oxymoron or Allies" Gary L. Kramer; (13) "Orientation Standards, Evaluation, and Assessment" by Richard H. Mullendore and Gary M. Biller; and (14) "Perspective on the Future of Orientation" by John N. Gardner and David A. Hansen. Also included is a summary of the Council for the Advancement of Standards guidelines and standards for student orientation programs and information on the authors. References accompany individual papers. (JB)

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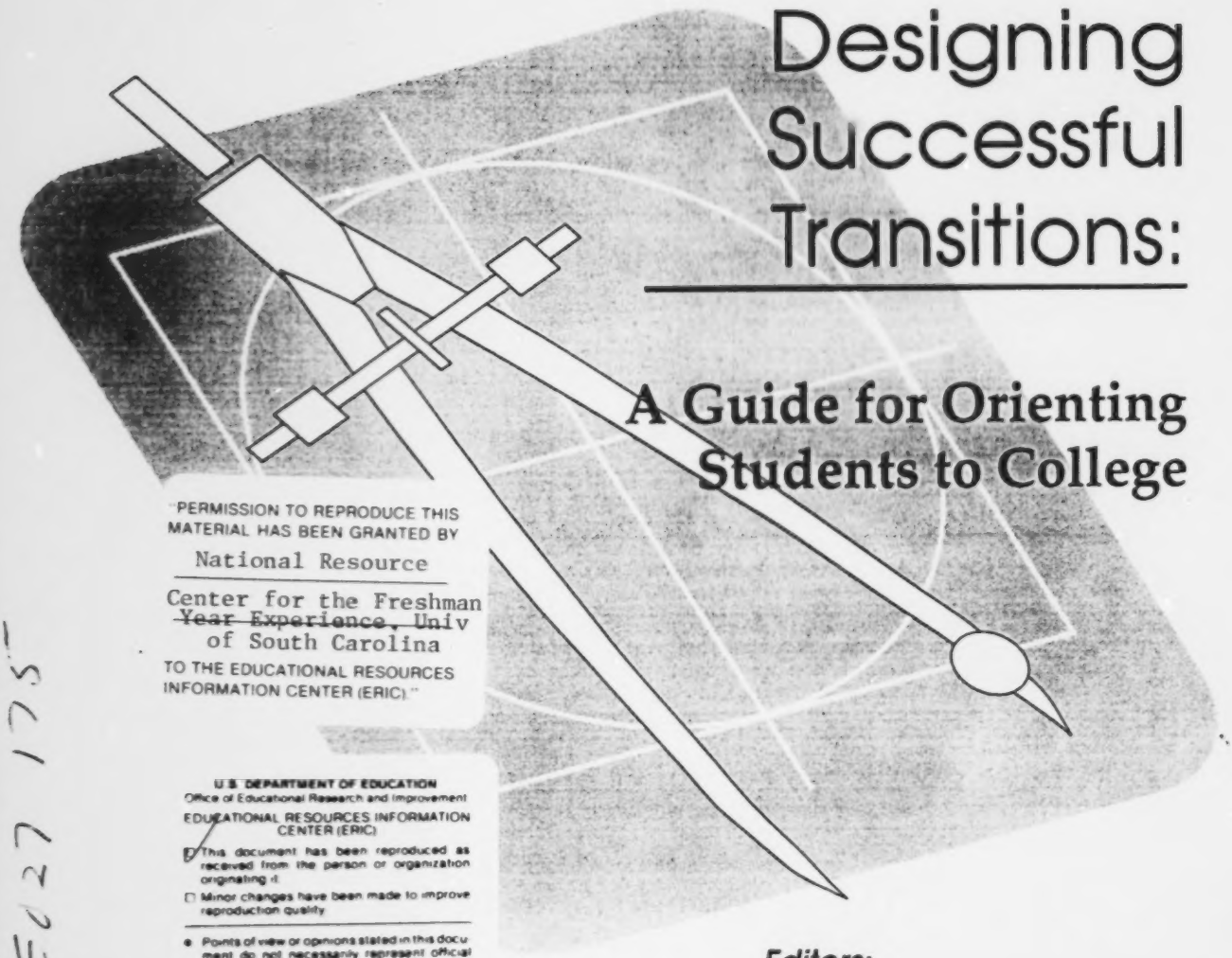

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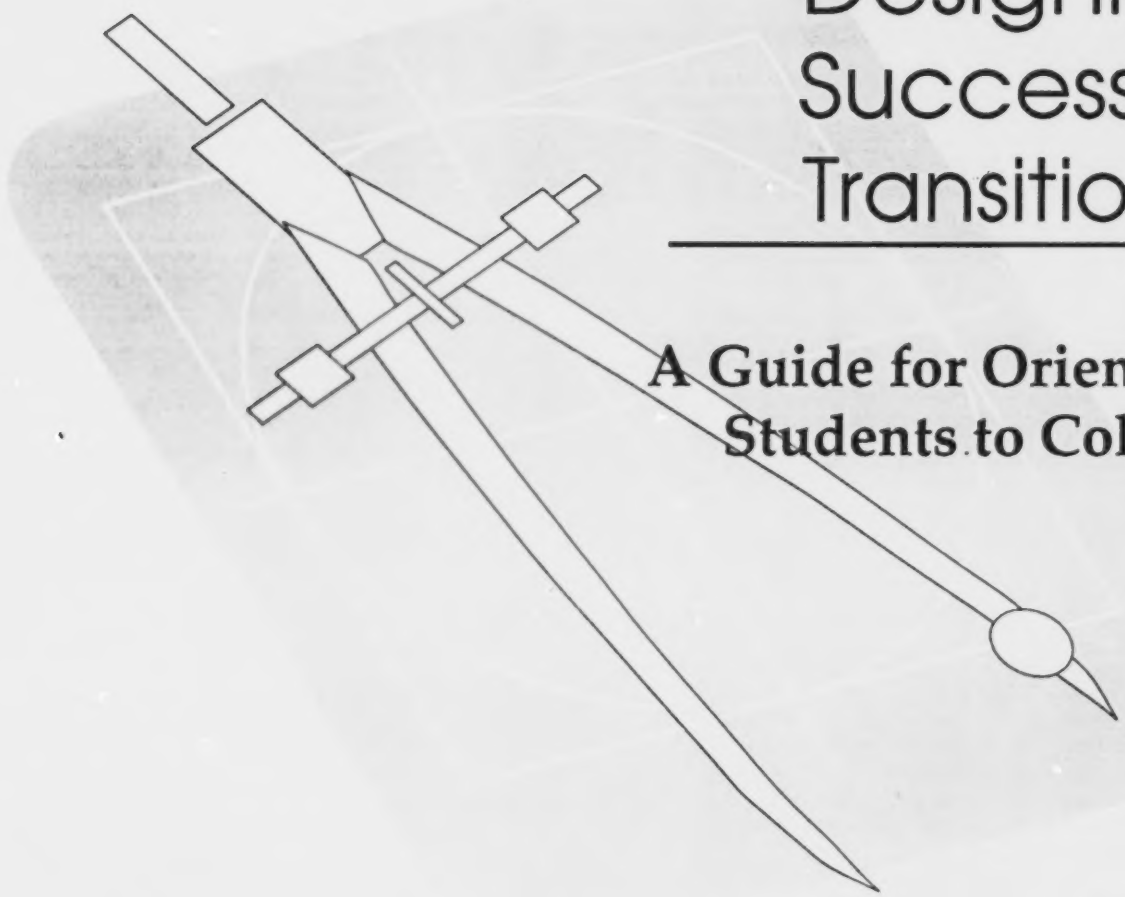

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University of South Carolina 1993

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Introduction

Richard H. Mullendore and John N. Gardner

Designing Successful Transitions: A Guide for Orienting Students to College represents the culmination of three years of collaboration between the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) and the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience (FYE). From the initial inspiration through the final publication, the working relationship between NODA and FYE has (as always) been enjoyable and productive.

We believe that this monograph fills a major gap in the current literature of higher education as it is the first comprehensive orientation publication since the 1984 publication, *Orienting Students to College* by the Editor-in-Chief of this monograph, M. Lee Upcraft, nearly a decade ago. The reader should find that this monograph provides insights regarding all aspects of student and family orientation programs. Many of the authors are practitioners, and their "front -line" knowledge and experiences have shaped the content so that the book could be a useful handbook and resource for use by professional higher educators, graduate students, and undergraduate student orientation peer leaders.

Designing Successful Transitions provides information and ideas for a broad audience which includes everyone who is interested in helping new students be successful. Presidents, chief academic and student affairs officers, enrollment managers, freshman seminar instructors, academic advisors, orientation directors, and student orientation leaders can all benefit from this publication. Students and faculty in college student personnel preparation programs will also find this monograph to be a valuable resource.

NODA and FYE are grateful for the efforts of M. Lee Upcraft, who agreed to be guest editor-in-chief before he really knew what he was getting himself into. His ideas, insights, and experience were invaluable as we moved from concept to conclusion. The Board of Directors of the National Orientation Directors Association deserves tremendous credit for their vision in supporting this project during a time of severe financial constraints for the association. Betsy Barefoot and Dorothy Fidler of the

National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience worked competently, quickly, and quietly behind the scenes to ensure a quality publication. We are also grateful to the many authors who contributed time and talent to the monograph.

We hope you enjoy and benefit from *Designing Successful Transitions: A Guide for Orienting Students to College.*

Notes from the Editor-in-Chief

M. Lee Upcraft

Nearly ten years ago, I wrote and edited a New Directions for Student Services sourcebook entitled *Orienting Students to College* (Upcraft, 1984). So when the National Orientation Directors Association and the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience invited me to edit this monograph, I was both challenged and excited by the prospect of revisiting how we help students make a successful transition to college.

My first step was to revisit the NDSS sourcebook. In the early '80s, we were beginning to think of orientation not just as a few activities before classes started, but as a comprehensive process that begins at the time of admission and continues through the end of the first year of enrollment. We were just becoming more aware that students entering our institutions were more diverse than previous generations, and our orientation programs needed to be more responsive to that diversity. We were beginning to ground our orientation services and programs in emerging student development theory. We were also intrigued by the potential of a somewhat revitalized innovation called the "freshman seminar." But perhaps most importantly, we were bolstered by the first empirical evidence that orientation services and programs had a positive impact on students' academic achievement and retention.

Perhaps most importantly, we were bolstered by the first empirical evidence that orientation services and programs had a positive impact on students' academic achievement and retention.

In retrospect, these trends seem on the mark today. It is now well established at most institutions that orientation is most powerful if it is comprehensive, and there has been a strengthening of emphasis both before and after enrollment. The diversity of students is even greater than ten years ago, including not only race/ethnicity, disability, and age, but gender, sexual orientation, athletes, international students, honors students, commuters, disabled students, students studying part time, and others. We have also seen a greater range of academic abilities, mental and physical health, attitudes, and family dynamics.

Further, our student development theories have expanded to account for this diversity. We have also become more sensitive to the campus climates within which student growth and development occurs. Freshman seminars have become well established in a majority of higher education institutions, and their positive impact on student academic development, retention, and satisfaction is well documented in the literature (Fidler & Hunter, 1989). And finally, the empirical evidence that orientation services and programs have a positive impact on student success has been confirmed through countless studies.

But other trends have emerged in the last ten years. Perhaps the most important trend in higher education is the decline in available resources to fund higher education in general, and orientation services and programs in particular. As institutions face reductions in public support, resistance to burgeoning tuition, and powerful pressures to be more accountable, the funding of orientation has become a major issue. This has led to an increased emphasis on assessment; that is, producing research- based evidence that orientation programs are, in fact, a force in helping students make a successful transition to college.

Technological advances, particularly with computers, telecommunications, and information systems have opened innovative and exciting avenues for communicating with entering students. Also, because of the standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs, for the first time, we have a guide for developing and assessing orientation programs.

This monograph is an attempt to deal with both the continuing and new issues that will face orientation practitioners through the '90s and into the 21st century. Not only is this monograph written *for* practitioners, it is written *by* practitioners. Not only are they experienced practitioners, but all of them have extensive involvement with the National Orientation Directors Association, an influential professional association with a long history of support for orientation programs and practitioners.

In Chapter One, I lead off with a description of the diversity of today's college students, so that the reader will know and understand the population served by orientation. Next, in Chapter Two, Mike Dannells provides an update on the theoretical bases for orientation, focusing on theories which should inform the practitioner. In Chapter Three, Gerry Strumpf and Greg Sharer follow with the trends and issues in orientation programs, drawing from an analysis of six NODA Data Banks.

In Chapter Four, Becky Smith and Dick Brackin present the components of a comprehensive orientation program, followed by a chapter in which Louis Fox and his associates discuss how orientation programs can serve as a catalyst for student academic and social integration. In Chapter Six, Dick Mullendore and Jimmy Abraham discuss the organization and administration of orientation programs. In Chapter Seven, Bonita Jacobs considers how we should make our orientation programs meet the needs of diverse populations, and Diane Austin, in Chapter Eight, tackles the important issue of the involvement of families in orientation.

Chapter Nine, authored by Les Cook and Barry Stearns, considers the special orientation needs of students in two-year community colleges, followed by a chapter by Charlene Harrison on orientation programs for transfer students. Next, Betsy Barefoot and John Gardner discuss the benefits of the freshman orientation seminar.

Chapter Twelve contains Gary Kramer's discussion of the impact and use of technology to support orientation efforts, and in Chapter Thirteen, Dick Mullendore and Gary Biller look at orientation standards, evaluation, and assessment. David Hansen and John Gardner conclude with a critical summary of the issues raised in this monograph, including a discussion of the challenges and promises of the future.

Writing and editing this monograph didn't happen without the help of many people. So my thanks to John Gardner from the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, and Dick Mullendore from the National Orientation Directors Association for conceiving the idea of this monograph. Betsy Barefoot and Dorothy Fidler also merit appreciation for their tireless efforts in coordinating and editing this project. And a very special thanks to the authors who made my job much easier by presenting outlines, drafts, and final versions of their chapters which needed very little improvement.

All of us involved in this monograph hope it will stimulate and challenge orientation practitioners to do their very best in helping entering students make a successful transition to college. We owe them nothing less.

1

Orienting Today's Students

M. Lee Upcraft
The Pennsylvania State University

In a chapter in a book I co-edited recently (Barr, Upcraft, & Associates, 1990), my distinguished colleague and friend George Kuh began a chapter entitled "The Demographic Juggernaut" with a quote from Schoch, cited in Thelin (1986). It is such a dramatic way of introducing the notion that students of today are strikingly different from previous student generations that I unabashedly (with George's permission) repeat it here.

> Remember Joe College? The young man who, after working hard and succeeding in high school, arrived in Berkeley, where he found a place to live and set out to sample the rich and incredibly varied intellectual feast at the University of California. Joe was independent, strongly self-motivated, and academically well prepared; he was able not only to sample the intellectual wares but also to settle down, about junior year, to a major field of study, which he pursued with diligence and increasing confidence in order to graduate in four years after his arrival.
>
> Joe doesn't live here any more. Perhaps, in truth, he never did. But now he can't. Times have changed, things have changed, and Berkeley has changed. (Schoch 1980, p. 1, cited in Thelin, 1986)

And how Berkeley has changed! The fall 1992 entering class was 40.5% Asian, 30.7% white, 14% Hispanic, 6.1% African American, 1.1% American Indian, 1.5% "other," and 6.1% declined to state their ethnic background—in other words, 63.2% nonwhite (T. Cesa, personal communication, May 4, 1993). But racial and ethnic diversity is only one indicator of how much students have changed, particularly in the last 20 years. In this chapter, I will review all the ways in which students have changed, looking not only at racial/ethnic diversity, but also at changes in age, gender, enrollment status, and attitudes. I will also look at the challenges which face us because of today's students' physical and psychological health and their family dynamics. The chapter will conclude

with what all this means for orientation programs which help students make the transition to college, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Changing Demographics of Today's Students

Racial/ethnic diversity. One of the most important trends in higher education since the 1960s is the increasing access of racial/ethnic groups which had traditionally not participated in or were prohibited from higher education. In 1990, minorities constituted 22.2% of total enrollments, compared to 18.7% in 1980. Put another way, from 1980 to 1990, while overall enrollments in post-secondary education increased by 13.4%, enrollment of American Indians increased by 22.6%, Asian Americans by 94%, African Americans by 10%, Hispanics by 60.5%, and international students by 30.1%. All of these increases were higher than the 8.5% increase in white enrollment (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac,* 1992). Hodgkinson (1985) predicts that by the year 2000, one in three students will be nonwhite.

To be sure, racial/ethnic group participation is quite uneven by type of institution. For example, 45.1% of American Indians, Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans attend two-year institutions, compared to 36.7% for whites. In fact, a majority of American Indians (52.9%) and Hispanics (54.6%) attend two-year institutions (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac,* 1992). Racial/ethnic participation also varies by geographic region. States with more than 22% minority enrollment include, in rank order, Hawaii, Arizona, California, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Alabama, and Georgia (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac,* 1992).

In fact, this racial/ethnic diversity may present even more differences than apparent from these trends, because differences within groups may be as great as differences between them. For example, there are four major Hispanic groups in higher education, including Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central/South Americans, each with different histories, traditions, and cultures (Justiz & Rendon, 1989). This same diversity within groups can be found for Asians, Native Americans, and African Americans as well.

Gender. Traditionally, higher education has been a male bastion. It was not until the mid-19th century that women were allowed to go to college, and then typically to all-women's colleges. But in this century, women began gaining and around 1980, surpassed men in total enrollments. In 1976, 53% of college students were male and 47% female, but by 1986, that ratio had reversed. Since 1978, women have outnumbered men among first time freshmen (Astin, Green, & Korn, 1987). In 1990, 54.5% of students in post-secondary education were women (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac,* 1992).

Enrollment status. Another significant shift is the tendency for students to enroll part-time rather than full-time. In 1990, 43.3% of students were enrolled part-time, (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac,* 1992),

compared with 39% in 1976. Part-time students are more likely to be women, over 24 years of age, and enrolled in two-year institutions. It is estimated that by the year 2000, a majority of students in higher education will attend part time (Kuh, 1990).

Given the trend of more part-time enrollments, it is not surprising that fewer and fewer students are completing bachelor's degrees in four years. In fact, according to a survey by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, only 53% of full-time freshmen graduated within six years. In other words, a majority of students are taking more than four years to graduate. This six year graduation rate was even less for Hispanics (40%), African Americans (31%), and American Indians (29%) than it was for whites (56%) and Asian Americans (62%). Hodgkinson (1985) predicts that not only will students take more than four years to graduate, but they will stop out more often and attend more than one institution.

Age. Since World War II with the advent of the GI Bill, older student enrollments have steadily increased, to the point where they represented 40.2% of all students enrolled in 1990 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 1992). Students over the age of 24 are more likely to be women, enroll part-time, and attend two-year institutions (Kuh, 1990). However, it appears that the adult student population has stabilized over the past five years and is not likely to increase in the next few years (Kuh, 1990).

Residence. Given the fact that students are older and studying part-time, it is not surprising that more students are living off campus and commuting. In fact, according to Hodgkinson (1985), only about one in six students in post-secondary education today are (a) studying full time, (b) 18 to 22 years of age, and (c) living in residence halls. So, in fact, Joe College, if he exists at all, is clearly in the minority.

Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities had virtually no access to higher education until the passage of Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which mandated equal opportunity for qualified handicapped people in the educational programs and activities of all recipients of federal assistance (Hameister, 1989). Since that time, enrollments of students with disabilities (impairments of mobility, vision, hearing, speech, or learning) have steadily risen to the point where it is estimated that 7.3% of all students in 1990 had some disability (Hameister, 1989).

Sexual orientation. More students are being more open about their sexual orientation. According to some estimates, as many as 10% of students are gay, lesbian, or bisexual, although most of them choose to remain "in the closet." Those who are openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual are frequently victims of violence and discrimination, and those who are closeted live in fear of their sexual orientation being disclosed (Evans & Levine, 1990).

International students. International student participation in higher education rose 30.1% from 1980 to 1990. Countries with the most international students include China, Japan, Taiwan, India, Korea, Canada, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Pakistan (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*

Almanac, 1992). While students from other countries may be racially and ethnically similar to native born students, they are probably more different than similar, due to cultural and language differences. Culturally different concepts of time, interpersonal relationships, equality and pedagogy, just to name a few, make the adjustment of international students to American colleges more difficult (Bulthuis, 1986).

The Changing Characteristics of Today's Students

Clearly, the students of today are quite different demographically than students of previous generations. Joe College is dead, replaced by a population of students that are so demographically diverse that we can't even invent a proper stereotype to replace our dear departed Joe. But demographics tell only part of the diversity story. Above and beyond these shifts, there is even more change which in the next decade and beyond may be even more important than changing demographics. These include changes in student attitudes and values, changes in family dynamics of students, changes in the physical and psychological health of students, and perhaps most importantly, changes in levels of academic preparation.

Changing attitudes and values. Since 1966, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at the University of California, Los Angeles, has tracked the attitudes, values, and aspirations of traditional-aged high school students who enter college. Clearly, entering students today, compared to those entering in the mid '60s, are more politically conservative (but a majority still describe themselves as "middle of the road"), less interested in "developing a meaningful philosophy of life," more interested in making money, more concerned about getting a job after college, more interested in the fields of business, computer science, and engineering, and less interested in the humanities, fine arts, and the social sciences. On the other hand, there has been little change in the percentage of entering students who list "obtain a general education" (about three in five) (Astin, et al., 1987; *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 1992).

College success does not happen in a vacuum.

Kuh (1990) concludes that "college students are more materialistic and less altruistic than their counterparts of previous decades. The attitudes and values of the current college cohort have been heavily influenced by world events and by the attitudes and values of the larger society in which they have been socialized" (p. 83). Today's students, depending upon their age, have been shaped by events including the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War, Watergate, the Reagan years, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and various economic booms and recessions, among many others.

Changing family dynamics. The American family is undergoing a transformation which is already having a significant impact on today's students. Divorce rates increased sharply during the 1970s, and current estimates

predict that one in two marriages will end in divorce (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). There has also been a dramatic increase in numbers of children living with one parent.

By the year 2000, about one half of freshmen will have been raised by a single parent sometime during their childhood. Put another way, only 40% of students in the year 2000 will come from families where their mother and father were together from the time they were born to the time they went away to college (Hodgkinson, 1985). Additionally, students themselves who are divorced and/or single parents make up a significant part of our adult learner student population.

But changing family stability is only part of the picture. There also appears to be a dramatic increase in numbers of dysfunctional families, that is, families characterized by physical violence, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and other problems (Gannon, 1989). Consequently, we are seeing more students today who are affected by family instability and dysfunction. For example, there is some evidence (Lopez, 1987) that students who are children of divorce are likely to report negative relationships with their parents. Henton, Hayes, Lamke, and Murphy (1980) found that students who lack family support have a more difficult time adjusting to college. Likewise, many students from dysfunctional families are likely to have relationship problems and low self esteem, as well as higher suicide-attempt rates, sexual dysfunction, social alienation, physical ailments, and psychological trauma (Hoffman & Weiss, 1987).

Changing mental and physical health of students. Students from unstable or dysfunctional families are part of a larger picture of the changing mental health among students. As recently as 20 years ago, students seeking help from college counseling centers presented problems clearly related to their college experiences, such as roommate problems, career indecision, academic difficulty, or relationship problems. In other words, they were "normal" students with "normal" problems.

Today, students with problems present a very different picture. According to Witchel (1991), there has been a substantial increase in psychological disturbance among college students, and waiting lists for treatment in college counseling centers are a sign of the times. There are more students in college today suffering from serious emotional distress, including self-destructive behavior, violence against others, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, as well as victims of date and acquaintance rape, courtship violence, family or spouse abuse, and family drug and alcohol abuse (Witchel, 1991). It is clear that many of these conditions are attributable not only to the collegiate environment, but to student experiences prior to, or outside the collegiate environment.

Physical health problems are also on the increase and are in part a consequence of some mental health problems. For example, while eating disorders are attributed to psychological problems, they can very quickly become life threatening physical problems, as the body deteriorates

through starvation. A 1984 survey indicated that counseling centers reported a 40% increase in anorexia and a 67% increase in bulimia (Gallagher, 1984). Drug and alcohol abuse can also create very serious physical and psychological problems. Victims of campus violence and date rape may also experience physical as well as psychological problems.

An even more alarming trend is the increase in sexually transmitted diseases among students, the most serious of which is AIDS. Campus health experts are worried because AIDS is increasing among all college students. The HIV positive rate among college students in 1990 is approximately 2.4 per 1,000, compared to 1.0 per 1,000 in 1980 (R. P. Keeling, personal communication, October 25, 1990). Much of this increase is attributable to the spread of the disease to heterosexuals, particularly women. Among younger age groups, the proportion of women infected with HIV is approaching that of men.

Changing academic preparation. Perhaps no trend is more disturbing to those of us in higher education than the perceived lack of academic preparation of today's students. And it appears to be true. The 30-year decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores has been well documented (Forrest, 1987). For example, the all time low (422) for the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was reached in 1991 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 1992). Further, nearly all students in higher education 30 years ago required little or no remediation in basic reading, writing, and computational skills. According to Forrest (1987), the percentage of first-year students enrolled in at least one remedial course went from near zero in 1955 to 35% in 1985, and that figure is much higher among institutions with more "at risk" students.

Changing sources of financing education. Before 1955, virtually all students paid for their education with their own and/or their parents' resources or with limited academic scholarship aid, with the possible exception of veterans who received GI Bill benefits. In 1989, 56.4% of all undergraduate students were receiving some form of financial aid, including 70.4% of students at private institutions. Of the financial aid received, nearly two thirds came from state and federal sources (*The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 1992). Only about 20% of undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 22 are pursuing a wholly family/student financed education (*National On-Campus Report*, September 15, 1992).

However, recent trends are putting more financial pressure on students and their families. Nothing is more distressing to them and their ability to finance their education than the rising cost of a college education. From 1973 to 1988, college costs rose more than 200%, a pace well ahead of inflation rates for that same period. Even more distressing to these students and parents is the declining availability and sufficiency of federal and state grant and loan programs (Astin, Korn, & Berz, 1990). As a result, more students are relying on their families, their savings, and working part-time to finance their educations. For example, in 1990, about four in five students said they were getting financial help from their families, compared to two in three in 1980 (Astin et al., 1990).

What All This Means for Orientation

In summary, today's students present quite a different challenge to today's collegiate institutions, compared to 30 years ago. Students of today, compared to students of yesteryear, are more diverse by age, race, socioeconomic class, culture, gender, academic preparation, family support and stability, sexual orientation, mental/physical health, employment, financial support, enrollment status, time to graduate, and attitudes and values.

The bad news is that most of these changes work against student success. From the retention literature we know that most of these trends have had a negative effect on academic achievement and retention. That is, generally speaking, if you are a student from a lower socioeconomic class, a person of color (with the exception of Asian Americans), academically underprepared, disabled, working more than half time, living off campus, mentally or physically unhealthy, lacking family stability and support, and studying part-time, you are more likely to drop out and less likely to graduate than other students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Students of today, compared to students of yesteryear, are more diverse by age, race, socioeconomic class, culture, gender, academic preparation, family support and stability, sexual orientation, mental/physical health, employment, financial support, enrollment status, time to graduate, and attitudes and values.

The good news is that in spite of this increased diversity, first-year students, regardless of their backgrounds and characteristics, still have a lot in common. They still enter college with an abiding faith that a higher education will make a difference in their lives. They also come with the mixed emotions of anxiety and excitement, eager to test themselves against new and unknown standards. At some level, there is a sense that somehow as people they will be different from before they enrolled. They hope that the change will be for the better, not the worse, but they also know there is no guarantee. And whether they realize it or not, someone important in their lives has to care, be that parents, spouses, children, faculty, staff, or other students. College success does not happen in a vacuum.

The challenge for us as orientation policy makers and practitioners is to develop orientation services and programs that focus on what students have in common, while at the same time recognizing and legitimizing their differences. That task is not easy, but it is our most formidable challenge as we face the future.

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2

Theoretical Perspectives on Orientation

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This chapter addresses a range of student development theories and campus environment models, the need for them, their evolution, their basic elements, and their uses in orientation practice. First, the case for using theory in practice is made, and then the various theories and models which may be of use to the orientation practitioner are described. Lastly, the theory-to-practice gap is considered and a process for utilizing theory in practice is explained.

Why Theory?

As Knefelkamp, Widick, and Parker (1978) so succinctly put it, "student services professionals are practical people and rightly so" (p. vii). So why bother with theory? Why not just go about our work, using common sense in dealing with the daily demands made by our students and our institutions? Well, most do just that, of course, without giving much thought to what that "common sense" represents. In fact, that "common sense" is the practitioner's highly personalized informal theory. Each of us has a set of informal theories (or explanations and predictions) based on practical experience, implicit assumptions, presumptions, biases, and (dare we admit?) prejudices, which subtly influence our decisions and generally guide our practice. They are informal in that they are not operationally defined, they are not explicitly stated, and they are not systematically tested. These informal theories are quite useful, but because we tend not to "self-correct" in our use of them, we dare not rely solely on them (Parker, 1977).

Formal theories are those which are explicit in their explanation of the relationships of observed phenomena. Because they require validation, they are, in contrast to our informal theories, self-correcting (Parker, 1977). This self-correcting feature allows us to rely on them with greater confidence. Their explicitness enables us to test our work against them, check the goodness of our outcomes, and craft the kinds of quality pro-

grams that characterize professionalism in our work. In the end, they make the difference between practice and informed practice.

The Evolution of Student Development Theory

The practice of the earliest student affairs professionals was guided by the philosophy of *in loco parentis* or "in the place of the parent." Colleges in the colonial and early federal periods had as their primary purpose students' moral and religious development. Students were generally younger than today, and were sent to college with the expectation that they would learn the classical disciplines as well as self-discipline as it was defined by their church, family, and society. College officers, like parents, were presumed to know best what their young charges needed.

As colleges in general became more secular, larger, and their students older, in loco parentis became less and less defensible as a way of relating to students. The seeds of a more scientific and professional approach to working with college students are to be found in the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937, 1949). Although the 1937 and 1949 documents were clearly service delivery oriented, they were nonetheless developmental in their grounding in principles of individual, humanistic, and holistic psychology and philosophy (Creamer, 1990). By the mid-twentieth century, what vestiges of in loco parentis remained were largely erased by increasing student activism, court decisions about disciplinary processes (Dannells, 1988), and the growing body of psychological and sociological theories about human development (Upcraft, 1989). These theories burgeoned and became more focused on college students in the 1960s and 1970s. Building on the works of Erikson (1950, 1968) and Sanford (1962, 1967), social scientists of that time sought answers to such questions as: How do college students grow and change? What most influences those processes? How do college environments affect them? We still seek answers to those fundamental questions, with growing recognition and appreciation of the complexity of human nature and the variability of the increasingly diverse populations now represented in college. [For a more complete treatment of the evolving nature of student development theory, see generally, Creamer and Associates (1990) and Moore (1990).]

The Categories of Theories

There are several taxonomies (classification systems) of theories about college student development and about the interaction of students and their environments (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). For the purpose of providing structure for most of the remainder of this chapter, we will use the taxonomy of Knefelkamp, Widick, and Parker (1978), as modified by Rodgers (1989) and adapted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991).

The Major Student Development Theories

The psychosocial cluster. Two basic principles of human development proposed by Nevitt Sanford, one of the earliest social scientists to study

college students and their environment, undergird the theories in this grouping. First, he postulated that development is expressed in increasing differentiation — that is, increasing specialization of the parts of the personality and in greater integration, a higher level of communication and organization between those parts (Sanford, 1962). Second, Sanford (1966, 1967) argued that students develop optimally when they are presented with the right balance of challenge and support in the college environment.

Rooted in the age-stage tradition of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Erik Erikson's views on psychosocial development have greatly influenced subsequent psychosocial theorists. Besides extending the stages of human development beyond the psychosexual, Erikson (1959, 1963, 1968) theorized that social demands play an important part in the development of youth through the resolution of certain predictable "crises" (a developmental paradox often mistakenly construed as being negative). It was Erikson who placed the development of identity at the heart of most of today's student development theories.

Arthur Chickering's theory of identity development (Chickering, 1969; Thomas & Chickering, 1984) builds on the work of Erikson and Sanford and is perhaps the most influential of all psychosocial theories in its focus on traditional-aged college students and its prescriptive value in student affairs programming (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In his landmark book, *Education and Identity* (Chickering, 1969), he postulated seven "vectors of development": (1) developing competence (intellectual, physical/manual, and interpersonal), (2) becoming autonomous (free of restrictive dependence on others), (3) managing emotions (awareness and control), (4) establishing identity (increasing clearer sense of self), (5) freeing interpersonal relationships (increasing tolerance and capacity for intimacy), (6) developing purpose (sense of direction), and (7) developing integrity (defining a set of personalized and consistent values). Chickering's view is clearly interactionistic (Knefelkamp et al., 1978) in that he identified six "conditions for impact" or key areas of influence in the college environment which can either enhance or retard development along the vectors: (1) clarity and consistency of institutional goals, policies, and practices; (2) institutional size; (3) curriculum, teaching, and evaluation; (4) residence hall arrangements; (5) faculty and administration; and (6) friends, groups, and student culture.

Marcia's work (1966, 1967, 1976, 1980, Marcia & Friedman, 1970; cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) builds on Erikson's concept of identity crisis by proposing that, in addition to the conscious experiencing of the "crisis" as a sense of engagement in choosing between competing but meaningful alternatives, the individual must make a commitment or an investment in each of four areas: occupational, religious, political, and sexual values. Marcia's work is also known for its applicability to women as well as men — one of the earliest — and as the basis for Josselson's (1987) significant research on the identity formation of women from their first year of college to the age of 34.

Helm's (1990) theory of racial identity formation delineates three parts of racial identity: (1) a personal identity, (2) a reference group orientation, and (3) an ascribed identity — "the individual's deliberate affiliation or commitment to a particular racial group" (1990, p. 5). Racial identity is "resolved" as the individual assigns relative weights to each of these three components. A small but growing subset of the research on human development addresses particular ethnic and racial groups. Because space limitations do not permit a balanced review of these, the reader is referred to Jones (1990) for an introduction to this important body of literature.

Heath's holistic maturity model (Heath, 1968, 1978), which has been compared to Chickering's theory (Knefelkamp, et al., 1978; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), describes five interdependent and continuous dimensions along which individuals mature: (1) increasing ability to symbolize experiences, (2) increasing allocentrism (other centeredness), (3) greater integration, (4) greater stability, and (5) increasing autonomy. He suggests that growth along these dimensions occurs within four areas of the self ("self-systems"): (1) intellect, (2) values, (3) self-concept, and (4) interpersonal relationships. Although highly abstract and complex, his model has particular usefulness in that he attempts to relate it to the major educational philosophers and to the goals of liberal education. Knefelkamp et al. (1978) note that, while Heath's dimensions are similar to Chickering's vectors, Heath's research suggests that most of maturation in the latter three self-systems occurs after the college years for traditional-aged students, whereas Chickering's theory suggests relatively more growth during the college years.

All students, but perhaps more importantly, underrepresented students of all kinds, have a need to feel that they matter, that they count for something, and that someone in the college setting cares about them. If they do not have this sense of mattering, they tend to feel marginal and are less likely to succeed in college. Since orientation to college is, by definition, a transition time, it would seem most appropriate to attend to these issues of marginality and mattering.

Older or nontraditional-aged college students' development has seen increasing attention in the last decade or so. Again, space limitations prevent a comprehensive review, so the reader is referred to Cross (1981) and Chickering and Associates (1981). Schlossberg's view of adults in transition (Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989), however, deserves some attention because of its simplicity and applicability to orientation. She portrays adult learning and development in college as a transition process with three stages: (1) moving into the college environment, (2) moving through it, and (3) moving on. All students, but perhaps more importantly, underrepresented students of all kinds, have a need to feel that they matter, that they count for something, and that someone in the college setting cares about them. If they do not have this sense of mattering, they tend to feel marginal and are less likely to succeed in college. Since orientation to college is, by definition, a transition time, it would seem most appropriate to attend to these issues of marginality and mattering.

In contemporary American society, perhaps no one college subpopulation is at greater risk of feeling marginal than that of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. To help us better understand and meet their needs, there is a nascent but growing body of theory and research-based literature (e.g., see Evans & Levine, 1990). Cass's model of homosexual identity formation (Cass, 1979, 1984) delineates six stages: (1) identity confusion — individuals ask "Who am I?" and consider that they may be homosexual; (2) identity comparison — individuals become aware that they and others have differing perceptions of them and their behavior; (3) identity tolerance — they seek out other homosexuals, but only tolerate, not accept, their sexual identity; (4) identity acceptance — increased contact with other homosexuals leads to validation and normalization of their sexual identity; (5) identity pride — characterized by a devaluation of heterosexuals and a revaluation of homosexuals; and (6) identity synthesis — a breakdown of the "us-and-them" dichotomy of stage five and a revaluation of supportive heterosexuals. Recent research (Levine & Bahr, 1989; cited in Evans & Levine, 1990) indicates that it is not safe to assume that college students, by virtue of their ages, may be found at any one level along this continuum and that working through these stages may supersede development along other psychosocial dimensions.

The cognitive-structural cluster. Like Erikson in the psychosocial arena, Jean Piaget (1964) was the precursor to those theorists who seek to describe the process, rather than the content, of change. In his theorizing about child and adolescent intellectual development, he portrays people as active interpreters of their worlds who create cognitive structures though which their experiences are filtered and given meaning. He conceived development as progressing along a hierarchical continuum of irreversible stages of structural organization, each stage being more differentiated, integrated, and subsuming earlier stages (King, 1978). His view was also interactionistic: development occurs as the result of the person interacting with the environment.

William Perry's (1970) model, or "scheme," of intellectual and ethical development describes nine stages (or as he preferred to call them, positions) of a continuum along which students move from a simplistic, black-and-white view of the world to a more relativistic perspective in which they may make commitments. The nine stages are best summarized by four general clusters (King, 1978): (1) Dualism (positions 1-2), in which students see the world in dualistic, discrete, categorical absolutes, and in which whatever is deemed to be "right" is determined by established authority and is unquestioned; (2) Multiplicity (positions 3-4), in which students acknowledge multiple perspectives, but different beliefs are held as simply wrong or not subject to evaluation; (3) Relativism (positions 5-6), in which students view knowledge as contextual and relative, multiple perspectives are subject to objective, comparative evaluation, and multiple "truths" may be appreciated, often resulting in indecision; (4) Commitment in relativism (positions 7-9), in which students make "an active affirmation of themselves and their responsibilities in a pluralistic world, establishing their identities in the process" (King, 1978, p. 39). These commitments, in such areas as marriage, career, and

religion, are modifiable and are consistent with the individual's self-identity and personalized view of the world.

Kitchner and King (1981) have developed their model of reflective judgment in response to a weakness they find in Perry's scheme. They argue that in moving from position 5 to 6, Perry shifts his attention from "intellectual growth to identity development, leaving unspecified the nature and processes of any cognitive growth beyond that point" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 32). For a comparison of Perry's scheme with Kitchner and King's model, see Rodgers (1989).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1971) has sought to define the cognitive stages of moral development, with each stage seen as a mode or structure of thought. Rather than focusing on the content of moral decisions, which may be socially or culturally influenced, he focuses on the universal cognitive processes — the how and why — of decision making about moral problems. He has identified six stages, which may be summarized by three levels (Smith, 1978): (1) Preconventional (stages 1-2), in which the individual responds to socio-cultural rules of good and bad, right and wrong, and decisions are weighed on physical consequences (stage 1) or on self-gratification (stage 2); (2) conventional (stages 3-4), in which decisions are based on conformance (stage 3) or loyalty to and maintenance of the social order (stage 4); and postconventional, autonomous, or principled (stages 5-6), in which "there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups" (Smith, 1978, p. 56).

In her book, *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan (1982) has addressed what she perceives as a misrepresentation of women's moral development in Kohlberg's, and others' theories. Her research (Gilligan, 1977) indicates that Kohlberg's research mistakenly finds women deficient in moral development because it stresses concepts of separation, autonomy, and justice. The development of women, she argues, is better understood by such concepts as connectedness, responsibility to others, and care — what she calls the feminine "care voice." Much like Kohlberg, she views development as occurring through stages of decreasing egocentricity and increasing other-centeredness, moving to a universal perspective. Although the "justice voice" may predominate among men, and the "care voice" is more frequently found among women, it is her belief that both voices are inherent in the life cycle. Gilligan's focus on women's development has been extended into the realm of cognitive development through a critique and refinement of Perry's scheme by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986).

Jane Loevinger's theory of ego development (Loevinger, 1976) encompasses moral and ethical growth, interpersonal interaction, and cognitive development and describes ten "milestones" (eight stages and two transitional levels) of development. The first four stages — presocial, symbiotic, impulsive, and self-protective — are usually found in the pre-

college years (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The middle three stages/levels — conformist, self-aware (a transitional level), and conscientious — are typical of the college years. The conformist stage, characterized by unexamined assumptions, peer influence, and high needs for acceptance and approval, has particular relevance to orientation professionals, for it is in this stage that most college freshmen are found (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The later stages/levels of individualistic, autonomous, and integrated describe increasing degrees of individualization (identity formation), cognitive complexity, and awareness and tolerance of differences. Integrated, the highest stage of development, is rarely found and is similar to Maslow's concept of the self-actualized person (Maslow, 1970).

Arguably at the interface of the psychosocial and cognitive development clusters, Fowler's theory of growth in faith (Fowler, 1981) provides an age-stage model of thinking about spiritual development, a dimension of human development largely ignored in the secular body of student development literature (Upcraft & Moore, 1990a, 1990b). He describes "seven stagelike developmentally related styles of faith" (Fowler, 1981, p. xiii): (1) Undifferentiated (a "pre-stage" in infancy), (2) intuitive-projective (early childhood), (3) mythic-literal (childhood and beyond), (4) synthetic-conventional (adolescence and beyond), (5) intuitive-reflective (young adulthood and beyond), (6) conjunctive (mid-life and beyond), and (7) universalizing (mid-life and beyond).

The typological cluster. Unlike the foregoing theories, typological models do not attempt to explain the nature or process of development, but rather focus on "relatively stable differences among individuals" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 36). These persistent individual differences may be found in such diverse, and often global, dimensions as cognitive style (Witkin, 1962, 1976), learning style (Kolb, 1976, 1984), level of maturity (Heath, 1964), personality (Myers, 1980; Myers & McCaulley, 1985), character and temperament (Kiersey & Bates, 1978), and sociodemographic characteristics (Cross, 1971, 1981). By far the most popular of these is the Jung/Myers-Briggs typology (Myers, 1980; Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Individuals are typed according to preferences, or habitual patterns of thinking, along four dimensions (Rodgers, 1989): (1) Extraversion (E) — Introversion (I), (2) Sensing (S) — Intuition (N), (3) Thinking (T) — Feeling (F), and (4) Judgment (J) — Perception (P). Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to arrive at a score and assign a letter of the preferred mode in each dimension, an individual's personality might be classified into one of sixteen types; for example, as an "ISTJ."

Campus Environment and Interactionist Models

In contrast to the foregoing student development theories, which tend to focus on intra-individual development, campus environment and interactionist models attend more to the environmental origins or influences on student behavior. In terms of Lewin's (1936) classic formula of human behavior, B = f(P X E), or "behavior is a function of the interaction of person and environment," the models in this grouping give relatively more attention to the X (interaction) and to the E (environment). One

substantial subset of this grouping, the so-called college "impact models" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), merit separate attention.

Impact models

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), the college impact models have several features in common: they tend to be primarily sociological, giving greater credence to the context within which the individual operates. They view the individual as an active participant whose behavior and development is influenced by the nature and intensity of environmental stimuli, including institutional size, type, policies, programs (both academic and non-academic), procedures, services, attitudes, values, and behaviors of others. They concentrate on the origins and processes of student change, but with less specific explication of the particular changes undergone.

The amount of learning, or development, is directly related to the quantity and quality of the student's involvement, and the educational quality of any policy or program is related to its capacity to induce student involvement. Astin sees students as active players in this equation, occupying a central role in determining the nature and extent of their growth by the choices they make and the energy they invest in the opportunities and resources they find in college.

Astin's theory of student involvement (Astin, 1984, 1985) is unquestionably the best known of the impact models. Simply stated, his research shows that "[s]tudents learn by becoming involved" (Astin, 1985, p. 133). He measures involvement by the amount and nature of psychological and physical energy a student devotes to an activity. The amount of learning, or development, is directly related to the quantity and quality of the student's involvement, and the educational quality of any policy or program is related to its capacity to induce student involvement. Astin sees students as active players in this equation, occupying a central role in determining the nature and extent of their growth by the choices they make and the energy they invest in the opportunities and resources they find in college.

Tinto's theory of student departure, a longitudinal model of institutional impact (Tinto, 1987), attempts to explain the college student attrition process. He argues that student retention (or attrition) is a function of the degree of fit or integration between the characteristics and skills the student brings to college and the corresponding elements in the college environment. Student attributes and institutional variables interact in both academic and social systems, leading to some degree of academic and social integration, which is defined as the extent to which the individual shares the attitudes and values of peers and faculty and conforms to the expectations of the community. Negative experiences reduce integration and lead to distancing from the college's academic and social communities, increasing marginality, and perhaps culminating in withdrawal. Tinto's idea of integration has been compared to Astin's "involvement" and Pace's (1984) "quality of effort" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Tinto (1987) also suggests that this process of integration occurs in three stages: (1) separation, in which first year students

disassociate from memberships in former communities, homes, etc; (2) transition, which bridges the old and the new; and (3) incorporation, which is characterized by full membership in the new social and academic communities of college.

Both Pascarella (1985) and also Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) have proposed a general causal model for assessing change that, unlike Tinto's, gives explicit consideration to the institution's organizational/structural characteristics and to the quality of student effort. Pascarella's model accounts for the influence on student development of five sets of variables: (1) students' background and precollege characteristics, (2) features of the institution (size, selectivity, etc.), (3) the college environment, (4) students' interaction with socializing agents on the campus (peers, faculty), and (5) quality of student effort. He believes that an institution's structural/organizational characteristics; such as size, student-to-faculty ratio, etc. indirectly influence students through their effect on the general college environment and on students' interactions with peers and faculty within that environment.

The newest of the college impact models, Weidman's model of undergraduate socialization (Weidman, 1989) incorporates both psychological and social influences on students, giving particular attention to how the process of socialization in college affects students' career choices, lifestyle preferences, aspirations, and values. He explicitly considers the continuing influence of parents and other noncollege socializing forces and how those forces interact with the socialization process in college.

Person-Environment Interaction Theories

Huebner (1989) offers "several overarching theoretical propositions" (p. 180) which may be said to define the person-environment interaction theories as a group. Most basic is the focus on the "interactional-transactional relationship between persons and the environment" (p. 180). The interactionist paradigm holds that the person and the environment are involved in a process of continuous, mutual feedback. The second proposition is that the individual is an active and intentional participant in this process. Third, in their attempts to cope with environments that may be incompatible with their unique characteristics, individuals "may react negatively or fail to develop desirable qualities" (p. 181). Fourth, optimal person-environment fit "is not absolute, perfect, or similar for all individuals . . . [and] . . . some amount of incongruence (such as challenge) amidst a generally congruent situation (such as support) will stimulate development" (p. 182). Last, citing Blocker (1977, 1978), she identifies seven essential "ingredients for growth" in learning environments: involvement, challenge, support, structure, feedback, application, and integration.

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Barker's (1968) theory of behavior settings focuses on the external, physical environment of individuals and how it influences behavior.

According to him, "behavior settings" — "standing patterns of behavior . . . that persist when the participants change" (p. 18) — select and shape behavior of different people in similar ways. Campus-related examples of behavior settings might include a sporting event, a class meeting, or a student senate meeting. Such settings are complex milieus of people, places, and things which exert powerful influence over individuals, and an understanding of them can be useful in predicting behavior.

Holland's (1966, 1985) work on vocational choice is an example of a "human aggregate model," which describes the environment and its influence on people by the characteristics of the people in that environment. His theory is based on four assumptions: (1) People can be categorized into one of six basic personality types (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional), which correspond to vocational choices. (2) There are six "model environments" which correspond to those personality types. (3) People seek out environments which are congruent for them, their skills, attitudes and values. (4) Person-environment congruence, or lack thereof, influences and can be used to predict behavior in the areas of personal development, stability, creativity, vocational choice, and achievement.

Moos (1976) conceptualizes the environment in terms of the "social climate" of those who are in it. He has identified three broad categories of the dimensions of social climates: (1) the relationship dimensions, which involve how people interact in the environment; (2) the personal development dimensions, which are the opportunities for personal growth and for task performance; and (3) the system maintenance and change dimensions, which describe the behavioral expectations and the ways the system maintains control and responds to change.

Stern (1970), working from the theories of Lewin (1936) and Murray (1938), developed a "need-press" model, which holds that the person and the environment must be studied on equal terms, giving equal weight to each in the analysis of a given situation. Personal "needs" are "organizational tendencies which appear to give unity and direction to a person's behavior" (p. 6). They are inferred from the preferences students report when asked about various activities. Environmental "presses" are situational pressures to act in certain ways. They are inferred from the aggregated self-reports of the perceptions of those in the situation. In Stern's model, behavior is studied in terms of congruence or dissonance between needs and presses.

In his "transactional" theory, Pervin (1968) argued that human behavior is best explained by transactions (reciprocal relationships) and interactions (cause and effect relationships) between persons and their environments. Like Stern, he believes it is important to understand the environment as it is perceived by the individual and also the difference between individuals' perceptions of themselves in relation to their situations. According to Walsh (1973), Pervin's model rests on three assumptions: (1) Large discrepancies between perceived real and ideal selves are painful and unpleasant. (2) Individuals are attracted to objects which they perceive

will move them toward their ideal selves. (3) "[S]imilarity in regard to objects of importance to the individual is desirable where the individual has a low actual-self/ideal-self discrepancy and undesirable where the individual has a high actual-self/ideal-self discrepancy" (Walsh, 1973, p. 158).

Clark and Trow's (1966) typology of student subcultures provides an example of the subcultural approach to describing college students' environments, which assumes that students not only share certain attitudes and behaviors, but that the students in a given subculture interact with each other, thus further shaping the behavior of the individual. By studying students along the following two dimensions (i.e., the degree to which they identify with ideas and the degree to which they identify with their college), Clark and Trow (1966) found four subcultures: (1) academic — serious students who identify with both ideas and their college; (2) collegiate — students loyal to their college, but not interested in, and perhaps even resistant to, intellectual activities; (3) nonconformist — a residual category of diverse students who share an involvement with ideas; and (4) vocational — interested only in training for their careers, these students do not identify with either ideas or their college.

More recently, Katchadourian and Boli (1985) arrived at somewhat similar categories in their study of Stanford students. Using scales of intellectualism and careerism, they found students tended to cluster into four types, which they call (1) strivers (high on both intellectualism and careerism), (2) intellectuals (high intellectualism, low careerism), (3) careerists (low intellectualism, high careerism), and (4) unconnected (low on both scales).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) concept of "ecological transition" would appear to have particular relevance to orientation professionals. New students are clearly in ecological transition, entering a new ecological environment in which they experience both a new role and a new setting. According to Banning (1989), if the "sending environment" (i.e., a traditional-aged freshman's home, school, community) differs too greatly from the "receiving environment" (i.e., the collegiate environment), the new student may find the transition too stressful and may fail to adjust, grow, and develop.

> Once the student arrives on the campus, the fit between student and institution may well determine whether the collegiate environment is going to have a positive impact (retention) or a negative impact (attrition). . . [T]he nature of the ecological transition and the resulting ecological congruence are critical to freshman success. To determine the "fit" suggested by these concepts, the environmental variables of site, demographics, and programs appear to be both useful and important tools. (Banning, 1989, p. 58)

Once the student arrives on the campus, the fit between student and institution may well determine whether the collegiate environment is going to have a positive impact (retention) or a negative impact (attrition). . . (T)he nature of the ecological transition and the resulting ecological congruence are critical to freshman success.

From Theory to Orientation Practice

Faced with this perhaps bewildering array of theories, the orientation professional might be inclined to disregard theory-based practice as unrealistic or unwieldy. The gap between theory and practice has been widely discussed, and student development researchers and theorizers are regularly urged to make work more relevant to practitioners. Likewise, practitioners are urged to "obtain and internalize an in-depth knowledge of college student development" (Rodgers, 1989, p. 118). Student affairs professionals have also been encouraged to know their students and their characteristics, to apply theory as they evaluate programs or plan new ones, to share what they know about their students with their students, and to build their personal theories to explain events around them (Brown & Barr, 1990).

But knowledge of theory is not sufficient (Rodgers, 1989). Orientation professionals must also know how to apply theory. To aid in this, Wells and Knefelkamp's eleven step practice-to-theory-to-practice model is summarized and adapted to the language of orientation by Upcraft (1993).

1. Identify pragmatic concerns. What problems or issues need to be addressed?

2. Determine orientation program goals. What specific outcomes (information, attitudes, skills) are desired?

3. Examine which theories may be helpful. Which theory clusters or specific theories are related to the desired goals? For example, if learning information and attitude formation are the central goals of an orientation program, then the cognitive-structural cluster may be most useful. Or, if social integration is paramount, then perhaps a combination of psychosocial and person-environment interactionist models might be most illuminating.

4. Analyze student characteristics from the perspective of each theoretical cluster. Which theory or theory cluster seems to best fit the students involved? How might it help in both formally and informally viewing those students? For example, if the student population is largely returning adults, Schlossberg's concepts of marginality and mattering might prove more useful than those theories developed on studies of traditional-aged students.

5. Analyze environmental characteristics from the perspective of each theoretical cluster. Which theory or theory cluster seems to best fit the environment? How might it serve as a "filter" for viewing students in the environment? For example, Tinto's model or Bronfenbrenner's theory might be useful in understanding student behavior in stressful, competitive circumstances.

6. Analyze the source of developmental challenge and support in the context of both student and environmental characteristics. What are the specific sources of challenge and support? What is the optimum balance for these students in this environment? Seek to insure that balance.

7. Re-analyze orientation program goals. Are the students "ready" to learn all that is hoped? Should the goals be modified?

8. Design the orientation program using methods that will facilitate the accomplishment of the intended outcomes. For example, if a goal of an orientation program is to improve students' academic self-esteem (a complex and deep-seated personal trait) in the college environment, then a long-term program, as opposed to a one-shot event, would more likely be successful.

9. Implement the orientation program.

10. Evaluate the program. Has it accomplished its goals? Have students acquired the new knowledge, developed the new skills, and/or adopted the new attitudes intended? Are the staff and the students satisfied? Develop suggestions for the future.

11. Redesign the orientation program if necessary.

To this eleven step process Upcraft (1993) would add a twelfth:

12. Revise or confirm the theory on the basis of its practical application. After a fair trial of several interventions based on the theory, it may become obvious that it is the theory, not the practice (orientation program), that should be revised.

Thus, Upcraft (1993) suggests that a "practice to theory to practice to theory" model would be most appropriate. In such a process, orientation professionals could contribute in significant ways to the body of theory which guides their practice. After all, if we expect informed practice, should we not expect and contribute to informed theory?

Conclusion

As suggested in the beginning of this chapter, orientation practitioners must move from a highly personalized "common sense" informal theory to a more generic, research based theory which fits their students and their institution. We must be familiar with the existing theory base, and ground our orientation programs in that base, if we are to be effective with students and maintain credibility with our faculty colleagues and our institution.

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3

Trends and Issues in Orientation Programs

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The major focus of this chapter will be to explore the trends that have shaped the field of orientation over the last decade. With the changing demographic picture, professionals in orientation have been challenged with a variety of agendas that face institutions of higher education across the country. The manner in which orientation programs have evolved over time and the challenges that will be faced in the future will be discussed.

Historical Context

To understand current trends in orientation it is helpful to develop a historical context. The history of orientation programs in the United States is almost as old as the history of higher education. Harvard was first to formalize a system by which experienced students assisted new students in their transition to the institution. Harvard faculty saw the value of establishing a support system early in a student's education. In addition to a personalized support system, students also experienced certain rites of passage which, in today's vernacular, might be considered hazing. Clearly this system was flawed, but it was the beginning of the formalization of orientation as a process that included support of students in their transition to the higher education community.

During the 19th century, faculty involvement and interest in students increased. Harvard institutionalized student contact by assigning to the faculty responsibilities outside the classroom. One of these responsibilities was the orientation of new students to the academic community. Other colleges followed suit and took an interest in those problems specific to freshmen (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

Following World War II, the population attending college began to change. This diversification was generally brought about by government action. The President's Commission on Higher Education (Truman

Commission), Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill), National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the 1972 amendments, and action by the Warren Court opened the doors of higher education to some who had never had the opportunity (Barr & Upcraft, 1990). While enrollments in colleges and universities began to soar, the individual attention that students had come to expect from faculty and staff was substantially reduced.

This increase in enrollment and diversity posed issues which institutions had not previously considered. Current orientation programs are responses to the changes in the population of students in higher education. Women, people of color, and non-traditional students clearly changed the venue of orientation programs across the country. Orientation programs have evolved from their roots of individualized faculty attention to programs that attempt to focus on a multitude of important issues while meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Clearly, orientation programs will need to continue to evolve and prepare for the future.

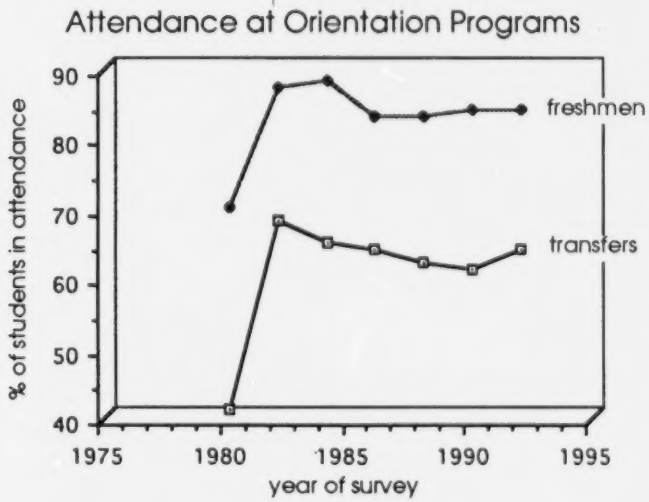
Summary of Major Trends in Orientation 1980-1992

The purpose of this section is to report, analyze, and interpret a number of the major trends in orientation from 1980-1992. The data from the *National Orientation Directors Association Data Banks* was used for the analysis.

- Finding - The percentage of students and parents attending orientation has risen.

A comparative analysis of data from 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1992 revealed that the percentage of students and parents attending orientation programs has risen during these years. The years 1982 through 1984 yielded the highest percentage of students and parents attending orientation. While there appears to be a leveling off of percentages after 1984, the overall percentage increase from 1980 until 1980 is quite significant. The graph in Figure 1 reflects the increases.

Figure 1



In 1980, 70% of freshmen compared to 84% in 1980 attended orientation programs. The rise in attendance at orientation also proved to be true for transfer students. Forty percent of transfers attended orientation in 1980 as compared to 64% in 1992. For parents, the increase was from 32% in 1980 to 54% in 1992.

Why are students and parents attending orientation in larger numbers? This is perhaps due to a change in the way institutions regard orientation. As Upcraft and Gardner (1989) noted, orientation programs have moved away from a "fun and

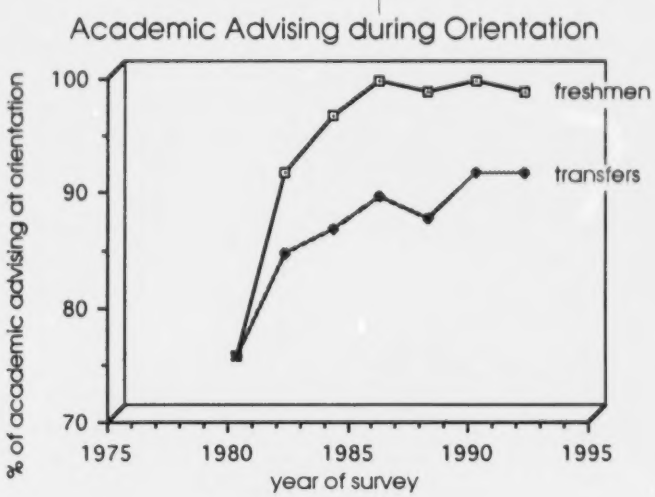
games" mentality to a more serious introduction to the academic community. Within the last decade, institutions have begun to view the orientation process as a viable retention activity (Noel, 1985). Because of these changes in orientation, colleges and universities are taking steps to encourage student and parent attendance by formalizing and marketing orientation programs with a more serious academic tone.

Institutions have also used academic advising as an impetus to encourage attendance. Though not mandatory at a majority of colleges, orientation programs appear to be the standard means of receiving academic advising prior to enrollment (Strumpf, 1990).

> • Finding - The majority of institutions of higher education include academic advising during orientation.

Consistent with the finding that orientation has gained a place within the academic community, the data also revealed that a larger percentage of students received academic advising during orientation in 1992 than in 1980. As Figure 2 indicates, 91% of freshmen received advising during orientation in 1982 compared to 99% in 1992, and 84% of transfer students in 1982 compared to 91% in 1992 also received academic advising.

Figure 2



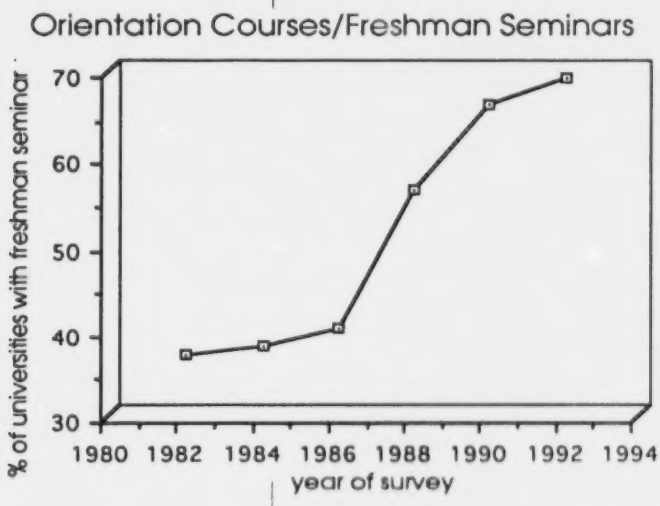
The decision to incorporate academic advising into the orientation process is a logical response to the retention literature. Beal and Noel's (1979) research concluded that the first six months of the freshman year is a critical time for students, and available counseling services are particularly critical at this juncture. Beal and Noel (1979) also found that students who utilize academic advising services persist at a higher rate than students who do not. The assumption is that by including academic advising during orientation, students will be more comfortable seeking out that important service during their first semester in institutions where academic advising is not mandatory.

The timing of academic advising may also be driven by students' strong vocational interest and consumerism. Facing difficult economic times, students of the mid and late 80s and 90s are more conservative in their approach to a college education. Astin (1992) pointed out that college students' primary objective in obtaining a college education is to get a job that will be well-paying. As consumers, students expect to receive services from the institution that will assist them in achieving their academic goals. Academic advising is one such service.

•Finding - There has been a rise in the number of orientation courses offered by institutions of higher education.

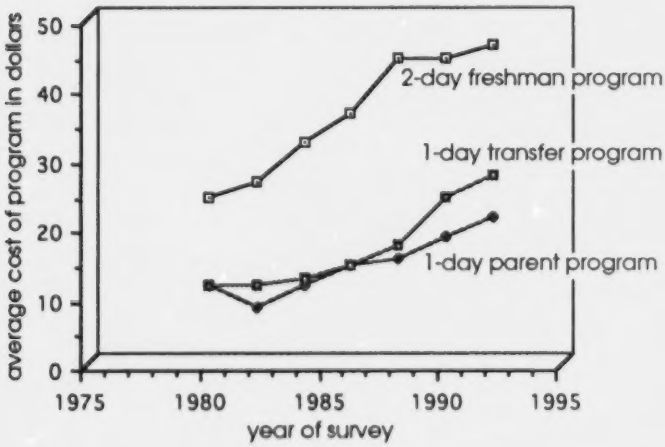
There was a significant increase in the number of institutions who offered ongoing orientation courses from 1982 to 1992. In 1982, 40% of the institutions reported that they had an ongoing orientation course, as compared to 69% in 1992. This trend is consistent with the growing amount of interest in the freshman year experience (See Figure 3.). Gordon and Grites (1984) noted that "more than ever before, new students need help during the transition from high school or work to the college environment" (p. 315). They stated that one of the most successful vehicles for helping students in this transition was the freshman seminar course.

Figure 3



According to the *NODA Data Bank*, institutions across the country are responding to the importance of orientation as an ongoing process. The primary mission of orientation, as stated by the Council for Advancement of Standards (1986), is to ease the transition of new students into the community. This important mission, combined with the critical issue of retention that now faces institutions of higher education, has generated a great deal of interest in the role of orientation as a retention activity. An increase in the number of ongoing orientation courses across the country is, in large part, due to the efforts of the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience. Through the Center's efforts, the positive effects of this type of experience on retention have been demonstrated time and time again in the research (Fidler & Hunter, 1989). Many faculty and staff members have commented that one of the most positive effects of an ongoing orientation course is that it recaptures the personalized orientation process that is rooted in the history of higher education (unpublished evaluations, University of Maryland at College Park).

Figure 4



•Finding - Fees associated with orientation programs have risen.

The analysis of the *NODA Data Banks* over the last decade have shown some trends that are not surprising. As Figure 4 shows, orientation program fees have risen from 1980 to 1992 while the percentage of funds received from the institution has not changed significantly since 1984.

Future Trends

We have looked at the trends in orientation programs over the past decade. The information compiled in each *NODA Data Bank* indicates that orientation professionals have attempted to adapt to changes and meet the needs of students and institutions.

What trends should be anticipated as we look toward the next century? What are the implications for orientation programs? In this time of competing agendas and limited resources, planning for change is essential.

Barr and Upcraft (1990) have outlined broad trends in higher education that are directly related to societal trends. The trends have implications for student affairs and specifically for orientation programs.

Enrollment trends. As Hodgkinson (1983) predicted, the demographic picture has changed the face of higher education in America. No longer are campuses dealing only with traditional-aged students of one race and gender. Institutions have experienced a growth in the population of women, ethnic minorities, part-time, and older students. Additionally, Grace and Fife (1987) have found a decline in the academic preparedness of new students.

Orientation programs must address the needs of this changing population. Many of the standard operating procedures may have been appropriate for the traditional 18-year-old population, but will they be appropriate for present or future populations? Should first-year adult learners be expected to attend a two day summer orientation program? Are programs being developed for family members, as opposed to just parents? Are orientation leaders reflecting the changes in the current demographic picture? Is information that is helpful to single parents or Latino students being provided? Are students able to find the remedial support they need to be academically successful? Are programs being offered in the evenings for working students? There is a need to evaluate the content of workshops and information sessions to assure their relevancy and appropriateness to the current new student population.

Economic trends. As with most facets of higher education, orientation programs will be asked to do more with less. With the rising costs of doing business, maintaining necessary functions may be difficult. It is clear that resource assessment and planning must be a priority in times of a shrinking economic pie. Greater collaboration with other parts of the institution as well as appropriate use of cost- and time-saving technology will be required to achieve the goals of orientation.

For example, in years past the orientation staff at the University of Maryland at College Park hand-delivered orientation program rosters to the advising offices. This required approximately three to five hours of staff time each week. Through collaboration with the University's Academic Data Systems, a computer program was developed that delivered rosters

electronically through a computer network. By using technology, more staff time can now be devoted to the individual needs of students. Orientation offices should not give up the human touch for the sake of automation; however, automation should be used to enhance the personal approach that is critical during orientation.

Social Trends. With the current demographics, it is inevitable that there will be changes in the social issues facing students and institutions. The likelihood of conflict cannot be ignored as campuses become more diverse and old assumptions and privileges are challenged (Smith, 1989). In most institutions of higher education, students will be exposed to heterogeneity from the moment they enroll. An orientation program that does not address issues surrounding race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation may be committing a disservice to the entire community. Programs should address the needs of all students, both traditional and non-traditional. Activities designed to educate the entire community accentuate the institution's commitment to embracing diversity and creating an accepting environment where individual differences are celebrated (Smith, 1989).

Students will benefit greatly if they learn to communicate with peers and faculty from other cultures, and through such communication they will gain an understanding and appreciation for pluralism. As with problems of attrition, an institution should not look to orientation as *the* sole solution to intercultural conflict, but as a step in a comprehensive educational process (Boyer, 1987).

Other complex societal problems such as substance abuse, crime, sexually transmitted diseases, sexism, homophobia, and physical and mental health will continue be a part of college communities. If one of the goals of orientation is to prepare students for their entry into a community of higher learning, they must be informed of relevant issues. The manner in which the information is communicated is critical.

It is important to keep in mind that students enter college at varying levels of social preparedness. Individuals involved with orientation programs must be sensitive to the student's readiness when addressing difficult issues. Sessions which allow students to process their thoughts and feelings are often appropriate forums. It is also essential that staff conducting sessions be well trained. For example, when the topic of AIDS is addressed at the University of Maryland at College Park, students view a film and then break into small groups with trained peer advisors who process the students' reactions to the film. The peer advisors are trained in ways to create a safe environment for discussion of the film.

In addition to exposing students to current issues, an orientation program should be able to clearly portray and explain the institution's position on social issues. By helping a student understand the expectations of the institution, campus regulations and policies will not be violated due to a lack of information.

Summary

Predicting the future is a very uncertain endeavor. The goal of this chapter has been to look at current trends in orientation and predict what trends may affect programs in the future. It is clear that retention will continue to be a major force in the development of orientation programs across the country. A move to recapture an environment that responds to the individual needs of students will continue to have a profound effect on orientation. As we look at past and present trends we can only try to develop predictions. With a fair amount of certitude, we can predict that funding for orientation programs will continue to be a concern. Demographic changes in our institutions of higher education, similar to those found in society at large, are also likely. Orientation programs cannot be satisfied by simply reacting to change. Assessment, planning, and ultimately implementing new and creative programs will need to take place if the needs of students and their families are to be met.

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4

Components of a Comprehensive Orientation Program

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A comprehensive orientation program is designed to facilitate the smooth transition of students into the academic atmosphere of the college or university. An orientation program is the first formal step in the continuing transition process and includes opportunities to enhance both academic and personal development, and successful programs are tailored to fit the individual needs of students matriculating on specific campuses. The best orientation experience occurs when there is total campus commitment to the process and results from the collaborative efforts of students, senior administrators, faculty, and the broad spectrum of student affairs and educational support programmers.

Goals and Objectives of an Orientation Program

To determine the components of a comprehensive orientation program, begin by asking three basic questions:

What is the nature and mission of the institution?
What is the mission of the orientation program?
What orientation program content will accomplish this mission?

The development of an orientation program must begin with determining the institutional mission and assuring its integration into the orientation program's goals and objectives. The recruitment, orientation, academic advising, and retention of new students must be viewed as an institutional commitment rather than as isolated departmental tasks. "Institutions should be committed to student welfare and should seek to serve the goals of their intellectual and social development" (Tinto, 1990, p. 41). Orientation programs strive to integrate the institutional mission and the personal growth of entering students.

The [CAS] Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/ Development Programs has designated 18 goals that are applicable to an orientation

program regardless of the size or objective of the institution. The development of the orientation program mission must be consistent with the institutional mission and with the standards set by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), a summary of which appears at the end of this monograph. The mission of student orientation must be to provide for continuing services and assistance that will "aid new students in their transition to the institution; expose new students to the broad educational opportunities of the institution; and integrate new students into the life of the institution" (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986, p. 97).

The primary goal of orientation is the adjustment and success of entering students. Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984) state that "orientation is any effort on the part of the institution to help entering students make the transition from their previous environment to the collegiate environment and to enhance their success in college" (p. 27). Orientation is a process. It is an intentional set of programs integrating the entering students into a new environment.

Titley (1985) states that orientation is a significant part of a multi-faceted approach to retention. The role of orientation in retention and the institutional mission might best be defined on an activity continuum. The recruitment of students would be on one end of the continuum and commencement of graduates on the other end. Integrated along the continuum are increased faculty involvement and enhanced service delivery. Orientation is a major activity on the continuum that provides entering students with the opportunity to interact closely with faculty and to develop lifelong learning skills. Beal and Noel (1980) find orientation to be the third most effective retention activity overall. Therefore, orientation plays a critical role in the entering students' adjustment and transition to a new environment.

Orientation is a process. It is an intentional set of programs integrating the entering students into a new environment.

Orientation programs vary greatly depending on the nature, size, staffing, clientele, and purpose of the program at each institution. Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984), however, highlight four specific areas that orientation programs should address. First, the primary emphasis of orientation programs should be to assist students with their adjustment to the academic environment. Entering students must be provided information concerning academic policies, procedures, requirements, and programs. It is also imperative to provide entering students an opportunity to assess their own academic abilities. Orientation programs must focus on academic issues which are the greatest concern to entering students (Brady, 1978; Higginson, Moore, & White, 1981; Brinkerhoff & Sullivan, 1982).

Second, orientation programs and services should assist students with their personal adjustment to the social environment (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). These programs must include experiences that enable new students to anticipate and understand the values and behavioral norms of their new social setting and the institution's expectations of

them as members of their new community. An environment should be created that minimizes anxiety, promotes positive attitudes, and stimulates self awareness. Personal developmental issues which students encounter in college should also be addressed. The orientation program must provide information about the student support services available to assist students with personal development issues. From the initial point of contact with the student, the institution must ensure that the entering student is integrated into the social and academic communities of the institution. Orientation programs can assist students in acquiring interpersonal and developmental skills to become socially adjusted citizens within the learning community.

Third, orientation programs can provide parents and family members with educational information and services to increase awareness of possible changes the student may experience during the transition to the institution (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). The family, as the primary support group, plays an important role in the life of each student. It is essential to provide information to family members to help them understand the intellectual and social development of the entering student.

Orientation programs provide opportunities for entering students to develop realistic academic and personal goals, to locate student support services and resources, to meet faculty and/or peer mentors.

Fourth, orientation programs and services should provide the institution with a better understanding of its entering students (Upcraft & Farnsworth, 1984). Opportunities should be provided for entering students and faculty to discuss institutional expectations and perceptions of the campus as well as their respective views of the social and intellectual climate of the campus. A faculty/student mentoring program often proves to be an important part of the support system needed for learning.

Orientation programs must have a defined purpose and must be incorporated into the institutional mission. Rather than a series of disjointed programs, orientation must become a deliberate and coherent institutional process in which issues and questions are addressed in a timely fashion (Lenning, Sauer, & Beal, 1980). Orientation programs provide opportunities for entering students to develop realistic academic and personal goals, to locate student support services and resources, to meet faculty and/or peer mentors. In addition, orientation programs can assist families in understanding the student's intellectual and social transition to a new environment.

Orientation Program Content

Academic development. Orientation programs tend to be seen either as the final step in the admissions process or the first step in the process of adjustment to the new environment into which students are moving. In fact, orientation may be viewed perhaps more accurately as an ongoing process of personal, intellectual, and academic development. This process begins with the first contact between the prospective student and the admissions staff and continues throughout the undergraduate years,

culminating for many with graduation and for others at some point of interruption in the academic experience.

Certainly a high priority of any orientation program is to provide opportunities for the student to begin to meet his or her personal and professional goals. The focus of many orientation programs therefore, has moved from enhancing social interaction and giving information about the campus and the community to providing relevant counseling and sound academic advising for each individual student (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986). In order for an orientation program to be a significant step in the developmental process of new students, both traditional and nontraditional, it must include opportunities for interaction not only with other students who have similar interests, needs, and experiences, but also with professional staff and faculty who have expertise in areas of students' expressed interests and needs (Dayton, 1989).

Retention studies indicate that quality student interaction with individual teaching faculty and with peers is the most important factor in student satisfaction (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978, 1991). The *National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank , 1990-1991* (Strumpf, 1991) reported that orientation professionals at larger institutions rate academic structure/requirements/grades equally important with campus activities/clubs/events. On small campuses, academics are rated second to campus activities. However, as early as 1981, Higginson, Moore, and White reported that first-year students indicated certain academic concerns to be their top three priorities followed by campus activities in fourth place.

Some faculty believe that orientation is the time to "tell" new students of the glories of certain academic programs, but, in fact, orientation is really a time to listen to students. By the time a student arrives for orientation, it can be assumed that some level of commitment to the institution and to curricular goals has been established. Although it is important that requirements and performance expectations be articulated for new students, the primary role of the faculty advisor is to listen to the needs expressed by each student and to help that student weigh his or her options and make decisions to meet those self-recognized individual needs (Priest & Milne, 1991).

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The collegiate atmosphere encourages students to assess their interests, values, and abilities (Frost, 1991). The next step in the sequential decision-making process is to discover and consider academic and career options and to make informed choices of educational programs, courses, and career goals. The orientation program staff, including faculty advisors, must collaborate with individual students in the learning process as they frame further questions, gather new data, realize changing values and needs, and recognize that initial choices may be interim decisions.

Astin (1977) maintained that more than half of those students who enter college as identified majors will change that initial commitment. In

certain academic areas the rate of change is as high as two-thirds (pre-medicine, pre-law, social work). Recent institutional research on one university campus suggests that over 60% of students will change commitment to a major at least once in the first two years (M. Williford, personal communication, January 8, 1993, Athens, Ohio).

Academic majors and curricula which lead to degrees are based upon a wide variety of requirements and range from highly sequential professional programs in engineering, the fine arts—music, theatre, dance, education, and the hard sciences to less sequential programs like general studies. To advise effectively, orientation program staff must first be familiar with institution-wide requirements, individual college requirements, major department requirements, and special curricular requirements and then be able to clarify those requirements in a supportive and non-threatening atmosphere.

The orientation staff must also listen for indications of feelings of anxiety and insecurity and offer nurturing reassurance in regard to initial academic decisions. The staff should inform students that their needs, the way those needs must be met, and, therefore, previous commitments to a course of study may change as they gain academic experience. Staff members should reassure incoming students that support personnel including career counselors, academic advisors, teaching faculty, psychologists, and residence hall staff are available to assist through all these decision points and transitions (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986).

A significant responsibility of the orientation staff is to set the stage for academic success once the student matriculates (Young, Backer, & Rogers, 1989). Helping new students develop strong academic skills and habits should become an immediate goal if such behaviors are not already in place. Essential academic skills include reading, note-taking, writing, proofreading, listening, and asking questions. Attending every scheduled class and keeping appointments with faculty are habits which also must be established at the outset if students are to expect success. All these ideas and more need to be articulated regularly and frequently throughout the orientation process.

Some colleges have developed a summer reading program as a component of orientation to enhance the process of integration into the college classroom. The use of pre-assigned topical readings as a basis for academic advising during orientation as well as the focus for classroom discussion throughout the first term has been successful on some, but not all campuses. Institutions that have reported relative success with the program tend to be those with highly competitive academic standards in place. They tend also to be colleges in which the primary focus is on the arts and the humanities rather than those with a professional or science focus (D. Schick, Emerson College, personal communication, May 4, 1993).

Student development. Orientation can be a systematic approach to addressing entering students' needs in all areas of adjustment to college life. But

developing a viable orientation program is dependent upon many factors. One major factor is the institution's commitment to the orientation mission. Common understanding of this mission by faculty, staff, students, and administrators will provide a cooperative framework for delivering an effective orientation program. Orientation directors spend the largest percentage of their time and effort in educating, engaging, and coordinating the many individuals who play critical roles in the orientation program. Therefore, the orientation director must be a well-qualified professional educator and administrator who knows and understands both the academic and the social developmental needs of entering students. The director must also have the administrative skills needed to develop comprehensive and effective orientation programs.

Another important component in developing a viable orientation program is designing a method of assessing program outcomes. Systematic evaluation of an orientation program will provide constructive data to help staff members determine whether orientation activities are accomplishing their main purposes, will allow for participating departments and staff members to share in the ownership of the program, and will ultimately serve to strengthen the orientation process. Continuing assessment of orientation programs is also necessary to meet the specific needs of the increasingly diverse population of entering students including transfer, adult, commuter, residential, international, part-time, minority, veteran, physically challenged and academically gifted students. Orientation might also include programs for parents and spouses of students, new graduate students, new faculty or administrators, as well as readmitted and currently enrolled students. Once the target audiences are determined and assessed, effective orientation programs can be developed for either limited or general populations.

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When institutional commitment has been assured and needs of the target populations have been assessed, the content of the orientation program can be developed. *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Orientation Programs* (1986) identifies two key foundations of orientation program content. These foundations are "an introduction to both the academic and student life aspects of the institution; and structured opportunities for the interaction of entering students with faculty, staff and continuing students" (p. 97). The goal of orientation program delivery is the personalization of the program. Active involvement by faculty, staff, administrators, and students is a prime factor in creating a community environment where entering students want to belong, perform, and contribute. Concentrated efforts should be made to affirm the entering student as a member of the campus community.

CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Orientation Programs (1986) also indicates the following program goals and content areas that orientation programs should address:

> Orientation programs should be (a) purposeful, (b) coherent, (c) based upon or related to theories and knowledge of human development and learning characteristics, and (d) reflective of the demographic and developmental profiles of the student body. The student orientation program must promote student development by encouraging such areas as: positive and realistic self-appraisals; intellectual development; appropriate personal and occupational choices; clarification of values; physical fitness; the ability to relate meaningfully and mutually with others; the capacity to engage in a personally satisfying and effective style of living; the capacity to appreciate cultural and esthetic differences; and the capacity to work independently and interdependently.
>
> The orientation program must assist entering students in overcoming specific personal, physical, or educational problems or skill deficiencies. Opportunities must also identity the campus environmental conditions that may negatively influence welfare and propose intervention for neutralizing such conditions (p. 5).

These standards and guidelines contain many possibilities for enhancing what students should learn and become as they engage in the process of educating themselves for careers and life's many opportunities.

Orientation programs at colleges and universities around the country were surveyed to determine topic areas that are specifically addressed during orientation. The *1990 - 1991 National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank* (Strumpf, 1991) reported the frequency of institutional responses for each topic by institutional size. These responses were as follows:

Topic Areas Most Frequently Addressed During Orientation

Institutions with fewer than 5000 students	
Academic structure/requirements/grades	92%
Campus activities/clubs/events	96%
Social activities	90%
Meeting with dean/faculty/academic administrators	87%
Business matters (financial aid, tuition, fees, etc.)	85%
Institutions with 5,000-15,000 students	
Academic structure/requirements/grades	96%
Campus activities/clubs/events	96%
Class scheduling	93%
Meeting with deans/faculty/academic administrators	79%
Business matters (financial aid, tuition, fees, etc.)	79%
Institutions with more than 15,000 students	
Academic structure/requirements/grades	93%
Campus activities/clubs/events	93%
Class scheduling	88%
Business matters (financial aid, tuition, fees, etc.)	85%
Meeting with deans/faculty/academic administrators	82%

What do the entering students want addressed during orientation? Higginson, Moore, and White (1981) asked 2,566 freshmen to rank their perception of freshman needs at orientation. The students identified the following needs:

1. academic course scheduling,
2. major,
3. sources of academic information,
4. orientation to activities and student needs of first week on campus,
5. housing,
6. money,
7. extracurricular activities,
8. social (p. 25).

These responses indicate that entering students desire information about academic issues and personal/social concerns during a comprehensive orientation program.

Organization of Orientation Program Content

The timing of information sharing and immediacy of the need for information are important considerations as program components are developed. Delivery of an orientation program is dependent upon institutional response to a series of questions:

What is the commitment from faculty, students, staff and administrators to the orientation program?

What is the institution's commitment to budget and staffing?

What allotted amount of time is necessary to accomplish the mission of orientation?

What are the institutional and student needs?

What amount of coordination is needed with various departments in the campus and local communities?

What have evaluations and assessments of programs revealed?

Obviously the structure and needs of a particular institution must be assessed before deciding on a specific orientation program format or combination of formats for the institution.

According to the *NODA Handbook* (Gohn, 1978) relevant factors which should be considered before determining a program format include:

1. Type of student body (social and economic background, intellectual abilities, background of parents, etc.);
2. Size and location of campus;
3. Availability of campus facilities;
4. Advising and registration procedures;
5. Availability of administrators, faculty, staff and student leaders;

6. Finances;
7. Relationship and commitment by other university departments;
8. Size of student body;
9. Geographic makeup of student body;
10. Other planned campus programs;
11. Availability of student records;
12. Academic calendar (p. 29).

It is necessary to determine the specific needs of the diverse population of entering students, availability of key campus administrators, and feasibility of conducting the function in campus facilities in relation to the most appropriate time for the institution to share information to entering students and family members.

After determining the structure of the orientation program, the next step is to develop the program content in an organized, coherent manner. Austin (1988) identifies six broad categories for orientation sessions and activities. These categories are as follows:

Academic information
- *academic structure, guidelines, regulations
- *class scheduling
- *meeting faculty and deans
- *study skills information
- *exposure to live or simulated class

General information
- *campus tours
- *institutional policies/regulations
- *description of services available
- *campus history, traditions

Logistical concerns
- *financial aid, business matters
- *registering a car
- *getting an ID card/library card
- *purchasing books

Social/interpersonal development
- *information on campus activities, clubs and events
- *social activities
- *get acquainted exercises
- *group/team building exercises

Testing/assessments
- *placement test
- *attitudinal test
- *career/personality test
- *demographic survey

Transitional programming
- *special workshops on subjects such as career development, cultural diversity, substance awareness, personal safety, roommates, acquaintance rape, commuting
- *workshops on affective issues such as leaving home, changing relationships, fears and anxieties (p. 44).

Format of Orientation Programs

What are the ways in which orientation programs can be presented? Orientation programs may be delivered using one approach or a combination of approaches.

One to three days during the summer. Summer orientation programs can range from one to three days prior to the beginning of school. These programs allow the entering student and family members an opportunity to become acquainted and adjusted to the campus community, relieve anxieties, provide concentrated and personal attention, and can serve as a positive retention tool. However, summer programs tend to be expensive for the individual student and family. They also require extra time and effort from faculty, staff, student leaders, and administrators and may need to be duplicated in the fall for those students unable to attend during the summer or who are admitted later.

Fall programs (usually a week). An orientation week is generally held prior to the beginning of classes. This program format is inexpensive for both the institution and student, has increased relevancy for the student, and provides more natural timing for becoming a part of the new environment. In addition, this format provides natural integration for faculty, staff, and student leaders and eliminates the need to provide programs during the summer *and* fall. Fall program weeks, however, tend to place less emphasis on academic advising, compete with other campus activities, and are less personalized. Due to the number of participants, this program format is more often utilized by smaller private colleges than by larger, more comprehensive institutions.

Orientation course. Orientation courses are designed specifically for first-year students. They are implemented in order to "improve the likelihood of academic and social integration and overall satisfaction with the college experience through the development of close student/student and student/faculty relationships" (Barefoot, 1992, p. 2). The advantages of an orientation course frequently include improved retention rates and grade point averages, an increased sense of belonging to the campus community as indicated by campus involvement, and increased out-of-class contact with faculty and staff. It is essential that continuous orientation be integrated into the total educational community and that it encompass the institutional mission.

Winter term/spring semester orientation. Entering students admitted during the academic year are also in need of specific assistance. Orientation programs for these students are designed with the same focus as summer programs. The orientation is held immediately prior to the beginning of a new term or semester and is designed to provide assistance in the transition to the new environment as well as to meet the logistical and information needs of students entering mid-year.

Summer bridge programs. Many institutions have developed a "summer bridge," "summer start," "links," or "headstart" program to ensure that

entering students who are at academic risk have the opportunity to acquire the academic skills needed to succeed and learn while in college. Summer bridge programs are designed to integrate entering students into the regular academic program by assisting in learning deficiencies. This early intervention enables the student to grow and develop during subsequent years in college.

Institutional Commitment to the Orientation Process

It is not possible for one person or group—a director of orientation, a department, a dean of students, an orientation steering committee—to develop an effective orientation process or a successful orientation program. The positive support and involvement of the entire campus community from the president to the groundskeeping staff is necessary if an honest, facilitative atmosphere is to be established. This does not mean that every member of the campus community will have direct programmatic responsibility. It *does mean* that every member of the faculty, administrative, and support staff will be attuned to the importance of the process as well as the specifically identified program and will contribute to the achievement of the goals of a sound orientation program.

Generally, responsibility for the defined orientation program rests with a member of the student affairs division (Strumpf, 1991). The task of educating the campus community to the significance of the program may be enhanced, however, on campuses where responsibility for the program rests in academic affairs. There are some programs administered through a business affairs office or division; however, those programs tend to focus less on academic concerns of students and more on enhancing a smooth physical and fiscal transition by providing information and procedures to the students.

It is imperative that the president or chief academic officer as well as the chief student affairs officer set the tone for the entire campus community. The quality of the program as reflected by evaluations from new students and parents can be improved when senior administrators are visible and participating. In addition, positive participation in the program by the president, the provost, the dean of students, and the deans of the academic colleges sets an example for other staff. Deans tend to be more willing to participate when they know that the president will deliver the official campus welcome. Faculty are willing to prepare and participate with students and parents when they see deans participating as well. The food service staff and housekeeping staffs also tend to be more amenable to presenting a positive image when they feel that they are part of a team. Achieving team spirit across the campus community does not just happen by accident. It is achieved by establishing an atmosphere of cooperation among service personnel and ownership in contributing to the academic and professional development of individual students. Such an attitude strengthens the reputation of the institution and enhances the entire campus community.

Achieving team spirit across the campus community does not just happen by accident.

Creating a campuswide commitment to quality orientation takes energy and time of each member of the senior administration as well as the head of each academic and non-academic department. It is the responsibility of each leader to articulate that the goal of the institution is to provide the best academic opportunity possible for each student. This means providing good food, attractively served; it means accessible academic advising from faculty; it means providing clean attractive hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms; it means availability of good libraries and ample study space; it means counseling and career planning available from the outset; it means adequate comfortable living space; it means programs to enhance time management and study skills; it means offering challenging teachers; it means an atmosphere in which intellectual growth and development are encouraged; it means the opportunity to test personal values in a non-judgmental atmosphere; it means the staff is courteous and helpful; it means all these things and more.

The orientation committee needs to have responsibility for providing a comfortable, nurturing, challenging, and rewarding atmosphere as well as a sense of ownership in enhancing the intellectual, spiritual, and academic development of each student on the campus. In addition to the officer who is identified as director of the program, the orientation committee needs representation from every constituency in the campus community. In addition to developing goals and guidelines for the program, the orientation committee is the primary means by which orientation policies and plans are articulated to each constituency. Ownership of and commitment to the orientation program by the campus community at large begins with this committee.

By sharing the notion that developing a campus of satisfied students begins with a positive orientation experience, the orientation committee can make significant progress toward developing a program that is challenging and responsive to each individual student. And satisfied students stay longer, have lower attrition rates, higher graduation rates, and a greater overall sense of satisfaction with the quality of their academic preparation (Pascarella, 1980). Increased retention and student satisfaction ultimately lead to both academic and fiscal success for any college or university community.

If senior level administrators see the significant positive effect of orientation on freshman persistence and if they recognize the fiscal impact of improved retention, they will hopefully also see the importance of appropriate budgetary support for orientation. Providing support for a quality orientation process seems like good pedagogy as well as good business.

Summary

A comprehensive orientation program focuses on meeting the individual needs of the many student groups seeking both academic success and the opportunity to meet professional goals. An effective orientation program assesses the needs of new students, designs program goals to address those anticipated needs, and involves professional staff, student leaders,

and faculty members to deliver accurate information and thoughtful, sensitive advising. An effective orientation program requires a widely-distributed investment of time and energy by the campus community as well as commitment of significant financial support.

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5

Orientation as a Catalyst: Effective Retention Through Academic and Social Integration

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Orientation and Retention

Well designed orientation programs are effective means of aiding students in their initial social and academic integration into an unfamiliar college or university environment. Moreover, orientation programs coupled with quality academic advising programs, both of which help to integrate students into a new academic and social setting, may exert a positive effect on the retention of students from freshman to sophomore years, and may also be associated with higher graduation rates (Bron & Gordon, 1986; Dunphy, Miller, Woodruff, & Nelson, 1987; Fidler & Hunter, 1989; Forrest, 1985; Gerber, 1970; Jones, 1984; Titley, 1985).

Evidence from the previously mentioned research does suggest that students who participate in orientation are more likely to persist and graduate at significantly higher rates. However, as Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) point out, nearly all of these studies do not take into account the voluntary nature of most orientation programs and the possibility that students who choose to participate in orientation activities may already (prior to matriculation, that is) have higher educational aspirations, be more motivated and self-directed learners, and have a higher level of commitment to particular institutions. Thus, the connection between orientation and student persistence and degree completion may be only indirect (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986). What we can conclude from all of the research on orientation is that successful orientation programs have a positive influence on freshman-year social and academic integration, and that, furthermore, social and academic integration have a

significant effect on student persistence and educational attainment. Orientation is, therefore, a catalyst, precipitating a chain of events that will help students understand and participate fully—and ideally, thrive—in their new academic and social environments (Tinto, 1987).

Academic Integration

The integration of new students into the academic environment is a critical component of new students' academic lives because it nurtures their hope and expectation of graduating. Encompassed in that anticipated graduation are all the hopes and dreams of students' families, their friends, and the institution itself. Orientation fosters the first steps of making those dreams realities. "The most important goal of orientation is to help freshmen succeed academically" (Perigo & Upcraft, 1989, p. 83).

Most orientation programs do provide a forum for academic integration to occur (Nadler, 1992). Biannually, the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) surveys its membership. The survey takes a "snapshot" of orientation programs and practices in the United States and Canada. Of the 352 institutions responding to the latest survey, over 90% report that their orientation programs cover "academic structures" and class scheduling and nearly 100% incorporate academic advising during the orientation program (Strumpf, 1991).

Central to successful academic integration is competent advising: timely and appropriate information to make informed choices about courses and major selection, as well as competent staff assistance. This is an aspect of college life that unfortunately is often found to be lacking. Boyer (1987) ". . . found advising to be one of the weakest links in the undergraduate experience." Although it is the most common component of orientation programs, advising is also one of the weakest.

Central to successful academic integration is competent advising: timely and appropriate information to make informed choices about courses and major selection, as well as competent staff assistance.

In part, inadequate advising happens because of a division within institutions between Offices of Student Affairs and Offices of Academic Affairs. Less than 10% of orientation directors report to Academic Affairs, while over 70% of orientation programs use faculty advising models. In addition, 20% of programs use professional staff advisors who presumably report to academic officers (Strumpf, 1991). While we do not mean to suggest that this division of labor automatically leads to a lack of commitment to academic issues during orientation, it certainly suggests a difference of commitment, training, and focus between those who run orientation programs and those who deliver the academic message within that program. The challenge is to develop orientation programs that use the skills of the orientation professional and those of the faculty to help students make a smooth transition into their new academic environments.

For many orientation professionals, developing a viable partnership with academic affairs is a difficult task. Their academic and professional

experience has often given them little insight into the academic life of institutions. Faculty issues such as the processes to receive promotion and tenure; the balance between teaching, advising, institutional service, and scholarly activity; and the ebb and flow of a faculty member's year (i.e., term breaks and summer contracts) are issues that student services professionals often neither understand nor appreciate. In many cases, faculty are dismissed by student services staff as being interested only in research and seldom available for students.

At the same time many faculty members also have little understanding or appreciation of student development theory, the nature and purpose of student services, program and budget development, and the ebb and flow of the year for student services professionals. In the worst cases, faculty tend to lump student services professionals in with administrators—the president, vice presidents, and others who do not teach.

In order to bridge this gap, student services professionals need to learn more about the nature of the academic side of the house. Training programs should expose them to the academic processes mentioned above, the history of the institution, and issues and challenges that are currently faced by the institution. If possible, student services professionals should read the minutes of the academic senates on their campuses and spend time listening to the concerns of their faculty colleagues. Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* can be extremely useful in understanding the roles that faculty members play in colleges and universities.

At the same time faculty could also benefit by learning more about student services. A reading of the student development literature found in the journals of two professional organizations, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), is useful in understanding the current issues. Books such as *The Freshman Year Experience* (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989) and *Student Services* (Delworth & Hanson, 1989) or attendance at relevant professional meetings could be enlightening for faculty members and could assist them in developing new approaches to teaching undergraduate courses, especially those that involve freshmen.

Factors Involved in Academic Integration

Levitz & Noel (1989) identified many factors critical to the success of first-year students. Some of these factors are particularly important for academic integration to occur and should be incorporated into the design of the advising component of orientation.

Academic preparedness. Students need to be given accurate and timely indications of their skills and placed at the appropriate level in courses such as math, English, and foreign languages. Usually this information is available as a part of the admissions process (SAT/ACT scores) or through placement tests, often administered during orientation programs. Institutions should undertake correlative studies to determine whether placement tests and placement levels correspond to student success in

these courses. Other course work such as College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and advanced placement scores also need to be evaluated. If admission criteria are not sufficient to make these recommendations, then internal tests need to be developed. In addition, advisors should have clearly stated options for those students who do not have the necessary minimal skills in particular academic proficiency areas. Placing students in classes that are either above or below their ability can set them up for failure: the former scenario leads to frustration; the latter leads to boredom.

Limited or unrealistic expectations. Students need to understand what their institutions expect of them—academically and socially—and then set realistic goals for themselves. While most orientation programs provide programming around social expectations and opportunities, too few provide an emphasis on academic expectations.

Students are seldom exposed to the fact that academic rigor and standards of a college are very different from those of high school. Strategies that worked for students in high school no longer work in the college setting. The pace and rigor of a 10- to 15-week course are very different from those of a nine-month course.

Orientation programs must make new students aware of the academic requirements of the institution. They must also provide information on how to balance the demands of social, personal, and academic concerns.

Orientation programs must make new students aware of the academic requirements of the institution. They must also provide information on how to balance the demands of social, personal, and academic concerns. Caring professionals who provide programming based in student development theory are of little value to a student who fails to meet graduation requirements.

Career confusion. Many students enter college with uncertain career goals and with questions about what academic major(s) to pursue. Students not only need to know that this career confusion is normal, but also need to know what resources are available to help them decide upon appropriate and realistic career goals. Students should also receive help from academic advisors who can help them integrate their career goals with the specific curricula that they plan to follow, both the general education courses as well as the coursework in their majors.

Advising. An important step in helping students make a smooth academic transition is the assistance of qualified advisors (Frost, 1991; Kramer & Spencer, 1989). Advisors should know a student's academic background, the course requirements of programs of study students plan to pursue, and the campus resources available to assist them. Advisors should be familiar with those courses and instructors that challenge students while providing a supportive environment that allows students to be successful.

Advisors should also be familiar with and sensitive to the different types of students present at their institutions, particularly those students who

are at risk of dropping out or who may face particularly difficult periods of adjustment to the academic environment. Special consideration should be given to the academic needs of special or marginally admitted students, physically- or learning-disabled students, and transfer students.

As mentioned earlier, faculty advising is the most prevalent model used in orientation programs. The advantage of this model is that it mirrors the traditional advising model that exists on most college campuses. Ideally, the faculty member who serves as the advisor for a student during orientation will continue in that role through that student's first year. Outstanding faculty who teach freshman courses can make excellent advisors because of the opportunity they have for continued contact both in and out of the classroom.

Many faculty are not on contract during the summer months and therefore are not available. The cost of extending contracts so that faculty are available for summer advising may be prohibitive. Those faculty who are on summer contract are often teaching, and their schedules may not match with the advising times in orientation. In addition, advising is, unfortunately, not considered in the faculty reward system on many campuses and is, consequently, not eagerly sought after by the faculty on those campuses. In a national survey of faculty, only 25% rated academic advising as being very or fairly important in achieving tenure (Boyer, 1990).

An alternative to faculty advising is the use of staff or peer advisors. Often peers can use their intimate knowledge of the institution to assist students in very concrete ways. Peer staff are also less expensive to hire and have flexible summer schedules. To be successful, however, peer advisors need extensive training and closer supervision than faculty. While the investment in peer advisors is great, the potential benefits of using peer advisors are numerous. Peer advisors can relate easily with new students, particularly with traditional age freshmen, and are able to convey the appropriate information in the undergraduate vernacular.

Social Integration

In addition to academic and intellectual growth during their college years, students experience significant social and personal change. For a traditional 18-year-old freshman, autonomy — personal and academic—is the theme behind social and intellectual integration. Students going off to college have never chosen an academic major or planned their career path to the extent they will as an undergraduate. Students who have lived at home with their parents and siblings all their lives will join fellow young adults in living groups without "adult supervision." Students will encounter many different types of people and ideas in college and will be challenged to define their opinions and values. With this new autonomy students confront many new issues, trying to balance new freedoms and responsibilities, including those surrounding the definition of their identities and the exploration of intimate relationships.

The development of identity, discovering the person one feels oneself to be or the person one wants to be, is at the center of the social integration undertaken during the college years. Beginning life at college allows a student the opportunity to look at old behaviors in a different light. Students will question some of the norms and values that may have been accepted in their family or previous environment. Independence from family, a new environment, and new intellectual challenges all contribute to a student's definition of self. Coburn and Treeger (1988) explain the development of identity this way: "Colleges and universities offer a time-out, a breather after the period of childhood and before the commitments of adulthood. During this time, students may explore, take risks, test and 'try on' new ways of being, and make mistakes without drastic consequences" (p. 15).

In 1989, a needs assessment was conducted by the National Orientation Directors Association that specifically looked at how orientation programs were currently addressing alcohol and substance abuse, multiculturalism, campus and personal safety, and personal relationships.

Intimacy—including both friendships and romantic relationships—also plays and important role in the social integration that students experience. In initiating potential relationships, students have to consider what they want and how to find it. They must also determine the impact that "getting close" will have on maintaining their own sense of identity. Sexual expectations and sexual orientation may be questioned for the first time, and the need to make decisions about long-term commitments will be the inevitable result of some relationships. Orientation can provide opportunities for students to meet and learn about each other. Getting to know fellow new students can help students ease into the initial period of social exploration and change.

During orientation, program directors are faced with the challenge of addressing many difficult issues that help students with their social integration. In 1989, a needs assessment was conducted by the National Orientation Directors Association that specifically looked at how orientation programs were currently addressing alcohol and substance abuse, multiculturalism, campus and personal safety, and personal relationships. The assessment concluded the following: (a) most institutions have difficulty addressing these issues in their orientation programs and are looking for ways to do so; (b) these issues involve behavioral change, which is difficult to instill in a two or three day program; and (c) structured programs regarding these issues are usually not well-received. Orientation professionals conducting the study concluded that, in order to make an impact, these issues need to be initiated in the orientation program and integrated throughout campus life.

The model and timing of "issue programs" vary. A variety of teaching and learning strategies need to be used, including role plays, handouts and brochures, discussions, panels, films and videos, lecture, and small group discussions. Student orientation leaders can present the information, or leaders can bring in presenters who can relate to new students' experiences. In addressing substance abuse, personal safety, and personal relationships, orientation programs should include a combination of

printed literature, information regarding campus resources, and creative programming.

Colleges and universities need to promote recognition, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures through student, faculty, and staff programs that highlight multiculturalism. We must develop orientation programs for all new members of the community, not just those exclusively for new students. In addition to the activities that an office of minority affairs might initiate, multiculturalism must be addressed throughout the entire orientation program. For example, the University of Vermont has initiated "The President's Colloquium on Cultural Diversity," in which new students spend their first two days on campus exploring issues of race relations and cultural diversity. Similarly, the University of Washington has developed a "Curriculum Transformation Seminar" in which faculty and students representing the spectrum of academic departments are exploring "the complexities of incorporating the study of cultural pluralism into the curriculum."

In order for students to become socially integrated into the institution, their previous environments should be considered. Peers and family influence the campus and community resources that a student needs and uses. An 18-year-old first-year student will probably depend primarily on peers, while a 30-year-old returning student with a spouse and children will have family as first priority. In planning orientation programs, these differences need to be consistently considered.

Because students will consider so many new issues when starting college, it is crucial that information about campus resources be presented during orientation in a pertinent, lively, and honest way. Peers can effectively deliver important social information to new students (Ender & Winston, 1984). New students want to hear about experiences of other students and learn the norms of their campus—fellow students are honest and direct and have no hidden academic or administrative agenda. Student orientation leaders should design, plan, and deliver the information about current or sensitive issues.

The most successful presentations also allow for small group opportunities, where a level of intimacy and trust can be developed. Participatory activities and programs should be encouraged, and various forms of media should be used. Often a variety of methods can be effective, such as following a skit with a panel presentation or small group discussion.

At the University of Oregon, an adaptation of the musical A Chorus Line *has been used in orientation to identify campus resources. In the process, the orientation participants are exposed to characters, played by the student orientation leaders, that express their concerns in starting college.*

The use of drama or role playing can also be a successful method. At the University of Oregon, an adaptation of the musical *A Chorus Line* has been used in orientation to identify campus resources. In the process, the orientation participants are exposed to characters, played by the student orientation leaders, that express their concerns in starting college. *Will I have any friends? Will I be*

accepted if I have a different sexual orientation than my roommate? Will I survive academically? These and other issues are addressed in this unique, student initiated production.

Every method possible should be used to teach new students about opportunities and programs available at the institution. New students must be given the tools needed to become integrated into campus life and to be successful both socially and academically. Formal and informal strategies should be created to address students' concerns and issues as they become accustomed to their new environments. New students often suffer from "information overload" after participating in an orientation program. Extended orientation throughout the first term, such as freshman courses or seminars, creates opportunities for students to deal with issues and find out about campus resources within the context of their academic coursework and their new environments.

The college experience can be like a roller coaster ride. Some of the twists and turns and ups and downs make new students feel like they are going too fast or they are losing control. The challenge for those creating orientation programs is to demonstrate to students that they are still on the track as they experience those feelings. The up-and-down nature of college life is inevitable. Orientation can give students the tools to cope with change and find help when it is needed. This crucial aspect of social integration begins at orientation.

The Balancing Act

Successful students balance their lives. They make time for academics, extra-curricular activities or work, and family and friends. Introducing these components during orientation programs—and beginning to teach students how to balance them—is one the best services provided by orientation programs. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), to be effective (in early socialization of students) orientation "should facilitate academic adjustment and initial social integration, thereby increasing the likelihood of persistence and degree completion" (p. 419).

Students need basic academic skills. *How do I know what is expected in a class? Where can I get help with writing papers? What are finals like?* Professors can give students a picture of what it is like inside a classroom—how much reading and writing they can look forward to, standards of academic honesty, the different daily demands of a science or humanities class. Academic advisors, whether they are faculty or professional staff, can help students determine what disciplines interest them, and how their major can lead to a career. Advisors can also lead students to academic resources such as writing centers, study skills courses, and computer and language labs.

Students must be introduced to campus resources and ways of coping with problems. *Who can I talk to if I have problems with my roommate? Where can I go if I get sick?* College students do not go to class and study in a vacuum. Outside pressures—new friendships and relationships, home-

sickness and family expectations, poor eating habits and little sleep—make it more difficult to concentrate on the academic subjects.

Students should discuss some of the issues they will face on campus. *What kind of people go to school here? How do I make friends? What are parties like? What about dating?* The transition to college involves academic and social integration. Students who know what to expect socially feel more confident and secure. Students who have thought about the issues they may have to face should be able to respond to new situations responsibly.

New students see that the orientation leaders are successful students, experienced in maneuvering through bureaucracy, adept at surviving numerous demands on their time and energy, and committed to the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the college or university.

Most importantly, students need to learn how to balance their different responsibilities and activities. *How can I manage my time with three classes and a part-time job? My family wants me to be a doctor, but I love art history. What can I be involved in besides classes? Can you have a social life and still be a successful student?* Orientation can begin to teach students about balance. Since many different workshops and tours are offered during a typical orientation session or welcome week, students have to decide which topics and activities they are interested in. They are also exposed to all kinds of information—academic requirements and options, procedures for registration and financial aid, various campus resources, and many different opportunities for involvement. Students must juggle all this information and prioritize their needs.

Student orientation leaders are the key to introducing the academic and social life of an institution and to showing new students how to balance the two. Student orientation leaders are living examples of how to balance school, extra-curricular activities, and personal relationships. The leaders' personal experiences serve as models for new students, often replacing their previous ideas about how successful college students look and act. When orientation leaders talk about choosing classes, searching for a major, studying for an essay exam, joining a sports team, or finding information on sexually transmitted diseases, new students listen to what they say. New students see that the orientation leaders are successful students, experienced in maneuvering through bureaucracy, adept at surviving numerous demands on their time and energy, and committed to the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the college or university.

Students are more likely to attain their degree when they are involved with their fellow students and with faculty (Astin, 1993). Orientation leaders can effectively conduct an entire orientation program. Student staff can handle logistics (checking students in, giving directions, leading students to meals and appointments) as well as developing and facilitating the workshops, tours, and advising discussions that form the backbone of the program. In this model, new students come to see their orientation leaders as mentors and role models and feel comfortable asking about academics, activities, and campus social life. Faculty can be involved in orientation programs as academic advisors or as guest

speakers, discussing academic responsibilities and their expectations of students. Some of the best connections between faculty and students are made informally, so inviting professors to participate in academic discussions or to join the group for a meal is effective.

Astin's (1985) student involvement theory emphasizes that students are more likely to continue working toward their degree when they are engaged in the academic and community life of a college or university. A student can build his or her involvement with a college or university upon the foundation laid during an orientation program. Orientation teaches skills that can be honed in freshman seminars, extended orientation courses, and within academic departments. Orientation also encourages extra-curricular involvement that can be built upon by special academic programs (e.g., honors programs, freshman interest groups), student government and clubs, living groups, public service opportunities, and campus events and activities. These sorts of curricular and co-curricular learning communities give students a sense of common purpose, while counteracting feelings of isolation (Astin, 1985). Orientation serves as a student's first learning community, setting the tone for future academic pursuits and connections with the community.

Orientation programs can begin to forge connections between a student and a college by involving student orientation leaders, administrators, and faculty with the new students participating in the orientation program. Orientation can serve as one of the first steps in a comprehensive program designed to involve students in the college or university community, engage them in learning inside and outside of the classroom, and commit them to attaining a degree.

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6

Organization and Administration of Orientation Programs

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Quality orientation programs do not just happen; they are complex endeavors that require strong organizational skills and considerable human and financial resources. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for Student Services/Development Programs lists 18 goals that every orientation program should attain (a summary of the CAS standards appears at the end of this monograph). Such goals are,

> "(to) assist students in understanding the purpose of higher education; . . . identify costs in attending the institution, both in terms of dollars and personal commitment; improve the retention rate of new students; . . . explain the processes for class scheduling and registration and provide trained supportive assistance to accomplish these tasks; . . . create an atmosphere that minimizes anxiety, promotes positive attitudes, and stimulates an excitement for learning; . . .(and) provide opportunities for new students to discuss expectations and perceptions of the campus with continuing students" (Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs [CAS], 1988, p. 21).

To accomplish these goals (and twelve others), orientation staff must harness and direct numerous resources throughout the institution.

Current emphasis on student retention has heightened the attention paid to orientation, and several researchers have indicated a relationship between comprehensive orientation programs and improved retention. Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfle (1986) indicated that orientation had "relatively substantial and significant effects on both social integration during college . . . and subsequent commitment to the institution attended. It appears that the orientation experience impacted on freshman persistence largely by facilitating a student's initial ability to cope with a new set of social challenges in an unfamiliar environment" (pp. 169-170). Forrest (1982) conducted a study of 44 institutions and found that a comprehensive pre-college orientation and academic advising program was linked to student persistence and graduation.

This chapter will provide information and recommendations relative to the placement of orientation within the institutional hierarchy, discussion of the many considerations regarding staffing an orientation program, and information regarding various sources and methods of funding orientation programs.

Placement of Orientation within the Institutional Hierarchy

Traditionally, orientation has been viewed overwhelmingly as a student affairs function. Given the current emphasis on enrollment management and student retention and the subsequent increase in interest in orientation, perhaps it is time to reconsider the location of administrative responsibility for orientation programs. This section will examine the orientation function, current trends regarding the administrative placement of orientation, and recommendations regarding reporting lines for the program.

The Orientation Function

"The mission of orientation must be to provide for continuing services and assistance that will: aid new students in their transition to the institution; expose new students to the broad educational opportunities of the institution; and integrate new students into the life of the institution" (CAS, 1988, p. 21). In addition, "student orientation programs must be (a) purposeful, (b) coherent, (c) based on or related to theories and knowledge of human development and learning characteristics, and (d) reflective of the demographic and developmental profiles of the student body" (p. 22). The goals of an orientation program should be to help students with their academic success and their personal adjustment to college, to help families of new students understand the adjustment students must make, and to help the college or university learn about its entering students (Perigo & Upcraft, 1989).

What an overwhelming set of challenges orientation professionals face!! The goals articulated by Perigo and Upcraft (1989) and the mission and program directed by the CAS standards are among the current expectations of those who supervise the orientation function. Orientation staff who understand the importance of these expectations and who meet them can certainly influence the new student's experience. This impact, as we have seen, has a strong influence on student retention. In fact, the orientation mission and goals listed above closely parallel the appropriate direction for a successful retention program. "Effective [retention] programs commonly stress the manner in which their actions serve to integrate individuals into the mainstream of the social and intellectual life of the institution and into the communities of people who make up that life. They consciously reach out and make contact with students in order to establish personal bonds among students and between students, faculty and staff members of the institution" (Tinto, 1990, p. 36).

If orientation programs can (and they should) connect new students with faculty, an even greater case can be made for their impact on retention.

"The research in this regard is quite clear, namely that the frequency and perceived worth of interaction with faculty, especially outside the classroom is the single strongest predictor of student voluntary persistence" (Tinto, 1990, p. 36). (Specific components of orientation programs can be found in Chapter 4 by Smith and Brackin in this current monograph. Further analysis of faculty involvement in orientation can also be found in Chapter 4.) The mission and value of the orientation function are clear. But who are the staff that perform this function? In what office do they work, and is the location of administrative responsibility changing?

Location of Orientation Programs

"The scope and structure of the administrative organization for orientation services should be governed by the size, nature, and complexity of the institution" (CAS, 1988, p. 22). Similar to many other administrative functions, there is no consensus regarding which office should be responsible for the orientation function. An analysis of the *National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) Data Bank*, 1990-91 (Strumpf, 1991) shows that orientation is performed by orientation offices, counseling centers, deans of students, student activities, undergraduate studies, admissions, student development, and a fairly large percentage of "other".

The *NODA Data Bank* (Strumpf, 1991) also indicates that in large institutions (over 15,000 students) orientation is generally the sole function of an individual (48%) and performed most often by the orientation office (49%). Comparing these percentages to the 1982 *NODA Data Bank* reveals a significant trend toward the creation of an orientation office (39% in 1982) and the allocation of staff solely to the orientation function (23% in 1982). (A more complete analysis of trends is available in Chapter 3 by Strumpf and Sharer in this monograph.) A comparison of reporting lines indicates that orientation was and continues to be primarily a student affairs function: about 20% of the programs reporting to academic affairs.

In medium sized institutions (5,000 to 15,000 students), there is also a trend toward the allocation of orientation responsibilities to an individual as his or her sole function (7% in 1982; 21% in 1990). In these institutions, orientation is generally a student affairs function (62%), while academic affairs is responsible 10% of the time; however, there has been a large increase of "other" offices. In 96% of the small institutions (less than 5,000 students) the person who is responsible for orientation also has other functions, and in these institutions orientation is clearly a responsibility of student affairs (75% student affairs to 4% academic affairs).

These data indicate that the location of responsibility for orientation programs is primarily in the area of student affairs in institutions of all sizes. Whether or not orientation is the responsibility of a single individual appears to be related to institutional size. It is also interesting to note that the development of offices of enrollment management has not (yet) impacted the location of responsibility for orientation programs; for example, less than one percent of the 1990-91 *NODA Data Bank* (Strumpf, 1991) respondents indicated that orientation is performed by enrollment

management. What is not explained by these data, however, is the large percentage of "other" responses regarding the reporting lines for orientation programs (21% in small schools, 28% in medium and large institutions). It is possible that some of those who responded "other" may represent institutions in which individual programs/colleges conduct decentralized orientation activities. These programs may or may not be attached to an institution-wide orientation program. In some schools, the only orientation that students receive is specific to an academic program, department, or college. Based on the responsibilities inherent in providing orientation programs, as well as current data and trends, to what unit should orientation report and who should provide this vital function?

Recommendations

"The student orientation program must have adequate and qualified professional staff to fulfill its mission and to implement all aspects of the program. To be qualified, professional staff members must have a graduate degree in a field of study relevant to the particular job in question or must have an appropriate combination of education and experience" (CAS, 1988, p. 23). The *NODA Data Bank* (1990-91) indicates that orientation is performed by those with a bachelor's degree 13% of the time, master's degree 73% of the time, and doctorate 14% of the time (Strumpf, 1991). Though these percentages seem to be somewhat in line with the educational levels mandated by the CAS standards, the orientation function too often is performed by an entry-level professional. "The orientation director must be extremely proficient in coordination, negotiation, supervision, and public relations in order to effectively meander through the institutional milieu and implement a meaningful and successful program or a series of programs" (Mullendore, 1992, p. 43). Is it feasible to ask a new master's graduate student to perform this function?

It is recommended that the orientation professional not be at entry-level unless previous experiences and/or current supervision can provide the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully perform this vital function. As President of the National Orientation Directors Association from 1990 to 1992, Richard Mullendore received numerous phone calls from new professionals and others thrust into the orientation staff position in which the person stated, "I have just been hired to do orientation, where do I start?" The person responsible for orientation must know and be able to work comfortably with virtually every component and constituency within and beyond the institution in order to provide orientation programs effectively. Relationships with the advising center, departments, colleges, business offices, campus police, physical plant, residence life, food services, local businesses, and others are critical to a successful and comprehensive orientation. This person must be able to recruit, select, and train student staff; manage a budget; and plan and implement a complex series of programs. It seems unreasonable to expect a new professional to possess the skills to direct a successful, comprehensive orientation program.

Regarding reporting lines for the orientation function, it is first recommended that institutions undertake an internal program assessment using the CAS

standards. Implementation of these standards can assist an institution in developing an administrative structure and guide the institution toward development of a comprehensive and widely accepted program. "Putting the standards into place can also assist in program planning, staff development, self-study for reaccreditation, educating the campus community, and political maneuverability" (Mullendore, 1992, p. 43). *Second, it is recommended that the orientation function report through the Division of Student Affairs, or where appropriate, through the Office of Enrollment Management*. Student affairs professionals constantly work within and beyond division lines. They are trained to understand how an institution functions, what services are available and provided, and they possess significant knowledge of student development theory and practice that is extremely important in deciding what an orientation program should do. They are often in the best position to recruit, select, train, and evaluate student orientation leaders. In addition, student affairs professionals often have an appropriate conceptualization of the value of both academic and social integration into the college or university.

In some institutions, it may be appropriate that orientation report to the office of enrollment management, which may or may not be within the division of student affairs. For those institutions that have established an administrative structure for enrollment management, Bean and Hossler (1990) recommend that there be, at the very least, a student affairs liaison officer. "This person is responsible for seeing that the many student affairs activities support the enrollment management strategy for the college or university. In particular, this person should help develop (or at some institutions have responsibility for) orientation, co-curricular programs, retention programs (like student skills centers), placement and alumni recruitment" (Bean & Hossler, 1990, p. 229). Whether in a direct coordination role or a liaison role, it is important that the orientation function be connected to both the student affairs division and the institution's enrollment management efforts.

A program does not exist until the staff members charged with implementation give it life. These individuals bring to the program professionalism, warmth, and energy.

Both of these recommendations regarding reporting lines are also applicable to those institutions which provide only decentralized, program-specific orientations. These institutions should also provide a college- or university-wide orientation program. Decentralized programs may not meet the needs of students who are undecided about a major or those who will change majors. These programs may be helpful in the academic integration of students, but may not adequately educate students about college or university services, activities, policies, and procedures, including important social integration components.

Staffing Orientation Programs

The staffing of the orientation program is one of the most important elements, if not the most important, in establishing an effective and meaningful program. A program does not exist until the staff members

charged with implementation give it life. These individuals bring to the program professionalism, warmth, and energy. They are the ones who will ultimately be responsible for coordinating many of the activities that will take place during the program. They are the ones who serve on the front line and answer a multitude of questions from students and parents who attend. And they are the ones who will serve as key "public relations agents" for your institution.

There are many institutional and human variables to consider when staffing an orientation program. Obviously, programs must reflect the characteristics and needs of their target populations. Freshman students may have some needs which are similar or identical to those of transfer students, but many are dramatically different. Similarly, residential student needs, when compared to those of commuting students, are quite different. If an institution is highly selective academically, then it has different orientation concerns and priorities from an institution with open admission policies. Institutions that attract a large number of older students would have programs to meet their needs that would be very different from institutions that attract the traditional student. In addition, the mission, goals, and type of college or university must be considered. It is important to know the heritage of the institution and what it hopes to become in the future. The goals of individual departments, divisions, schools, and colleges within the institution must be known. The type of institution—large research, religious, private, community college, etc.—will certainly have an impact upon staffing.

There are many types of orientation programs, and careful consideration must be given to the kind of program initiated at each unique institution.

After the mission and goals of the institution are clearly articulated and understood, it is appropriate to consider the type or types of orientation program(s) that an institution wants to implement. There are many types of orientation programs, and careful consideration must be given to the kind of program initiated at each unique institution. Administratively, an institution needs to look at its facilities when developing an orientation program. For example, how many students and families can be housed and fed? Often there are other summer programs that conflict with orientation program needs. Because of this and other considerations, some institutions have only a fall program, which brings students in for orientation from two weeks to two days before the fall semester begins. Some institutions do a combination of both summer and fall programs in which students come in for a few days in the summer and return for a few days prior to the beginning of school. In addition, many schools have a continuing orientation program whereby they continue the process throughout the first semester or year. According to the *NODA Data Bank* (1990-91), in institutions with less than 5,000 students, the majority of programs are held for three days preceding the beginning of the semester (Strumpf, 1991). For institutions with 5,000 to 15,000 students, 44% bring their students in for two days during the summer, while 54% of the institutions with an enrollment of 15,000 or more use this model.

There are other factors that also come into play in staffing an orientation program. What types of programs are needed for parents and other family members? What about programs for disabled students, graduate students, athletes, international students, academically disadvantaged students, etc.? All of these are important groups and must be carefully considered by each institution. The parent/family program can be an integral part of the orientation process. As competition for students, in particular top scholars, increases and as parents, spouses, and others become more involved in the college selection process, an orientation program is extremely important. Family members need to have an opportunity to interact with faculty, students and staff, to tour the campus, and to receive answers to the many questions they have. Parents in particular must feel comfortable with and knowledgeable about the institution that their son or daughter has chosen. It is also important that they have the opportunity to ask some questions without their son or daughter present. At many colleges and universities, family and student programs are held concurrently, but most of the sessions are separate.

Orientation programs are most often located in the division of student affairs, but orientation directors occasionally report to other divisions. The most important factor is that the program, particularly the ability to staff it appropriately, is supported both financially and philosophically. The CAS standards indicate that money from the college's or university's general fund should be allocated to underwrite orientation expenses. This standard is strongly supported by orientation professionals. Many programs may cease to exist, especially in times of decreased state funding, if the institution does not understand their importance. This support must begin with the president and be conveyed to everyone working within the institution and to the local community as the section of this chapter on funding will indicate.

Many programs may cease to exist, especially in times of decreased state funding, if the institution does not understand their importance.

Community college orientation programs often include a broader range of activities than four-year schools typically provide. In contrast to the social and issues-related programs of four-year schools, community colleges emphasize counseling and academic placement. Community colleges are realizing how important a successful orientation program is to student recruitment as well as retention. For a more extensive discussion of community college orientation programs, see Chapter 9 of this monograph.

Professional and Support Staff

While some institutions have an individual who is responsible just for orientation, it is more common for directors to have other job responsibilities. These staff members come from the ranks of student activities, academic advising, admissions, and other areas and must be qualified to provide program leadership. Because of their unique position, orientation directors must be able to perform a multitude of tasks personally as well as to delegate responsibility successfully. As orientation professionals

well know, attention to hundreds of details is essential in establishing a quality program. It is important that these individuals be able to motivate not only those who work for them, but other people on campus and in the community as well. Because orientation can be both an institution and community-wide program, the orientation director must be a competent professional who is respected within and beyond the institution.

The orientation director also must enjoy working directly with students. Few administrative positions provide the opportunity for the constant, positive student contact that is available to the orientation professional. This person works year round with the student orientation leaders, and at program times with all of the new, enthusiastic, and anxious students. Appropriate graduate school training and substantive experience working with students prior to beginning the orientation position is imperative.

In many institutions, support staff members are not given the credit that is due to them. However, few orientation directors would even consider putting together a program without quality support staff. These individuals, above all, must enjoy working with people—students, parents, faculty and staff. They must be knowledgeable and patient, and they must understand that they set the tone for the office and the institution. They are the ones whom students meet first, the first voice on the telephone, and often the first impression of the college or university.

It is critical that support staff be appropriately trained in all skills areas including management. In today's competitive market for students, quality service must be provided by all staff. Consumers want quick and accurate responses when they ask for information about orientation or when they are waiting on confirmation. It is important that support staff be empowered to make decisions when necessary, and that they feel they are part of the orientation team.

Staff and Faculty

It goes without saying that the orientation program does not occur in isolation. It is a college- or university-wide effort, and the involvement of faculty and staff is critical to its success. As noted earlier, interaction with faculty outside the classroom is a powerful retention agent. As program director, it is important to try to get those faculty and staff who want to be a part of your program and who understand your goals and objectives to become involved. This will provide a better working relationship and insure a positive first impression for the students, parents, and other groups whom faculty and staff meet during the orientation program. An orientation director, after being at an institution for some time, will often identify specific faculty and staff members who make presentations during the orientation program. For instance, a common activity on many campuses is an icebreaker exercise that is held at the beginning of the orientation program. If there is someone on your campus with high energy and excellent communication skills who can lead this type of activity, their efforts will be greatly appreciated by the students.

Because scheduling classes is an important component of the orientation process at most institutions, colleges and universities generally provide faculty members to do advising. Weekend programs are held on many campuses, and faculty members often give up Saturdays and/or Sundays to be a part of this process with students. It is extremely important that these individuals, especially those who receive no extra compensation, be thanked for making this special effort. Most faculty members want to be of assistance; many went into the teaching profession to be of service to students, so they understand the importance of the orientation program. As noted by Mullendore and Biller in Chapter 13 of this monograph, most institutions conduct evaluations of the orientation program, and the results need to be shared with the college or university community, including both faculty and staff members.

Selection, Training, and Supervision of Student Orientation Leaders

The selection, training, and supervision of student orientation leaders are the keys to a successful orientation program. The importance of a fair and comprehensive selection process on each campus should not be ignored. Some basic guidelines include determining what qualities a student orientation leader should possess, developing a selection procedure that will help identify these qualities, implementing the selection process, and conducting an evaluation of the selection process to determine its effectiveness. Student staff selection usually consists of an application and interviews, both group and personal. Efforts must be made to attract and recruit a diverse group of students for these critical leadership positions. Former orientation leaders can provide valuable insights, and their involvement in the process should be welcomed and encouraged.

On most campuses, the orientation leader is highly respected, which means that the number of applicants often exceeds the number of openings. It is important that students understand what is going to take place during the orientation program so they will be fully committed to the selection process and the program. Besides the usual routine of hanging posters and announcing the deadline in the school paper and on radio or television, many institutions are getting former orientation leaders who are still on campus to help recruit new leaders. During or following the application process, it is important to hold an informational meeting to go over, in as much detail as possible, what will take place for the student in interviews and while he or she is an orientation leader. Besides the obvious items such as salary (if it is a paid position), the length of the orientation program, and so forth, it is important that these students understand the director's expectations. Many directors would agree that clarifying expectations up front can help build a very successful orientation team and prevent some problems from happening.

After student applicants understand the position, the director's expectations, and their responsibilities, then the interview process can begin. Some institutions use group interviews, some use individual interviews, some use interviews with faculty and staff, and some provide interviews with former orientation leaders. Many institutions observe both written

and verbal communication skills through a variety of experiences. It is important that a selection timetable be established and that candidates know when they will find out about their selection or non-selection.

When the staff has been selected, the training process should begin as soon as possible in order to capitalize on the excitement generated by selection. For each program there are basic steps which may be used as guidelines, including (a) assessing the training needs of the student orientation leaders and other staff, (b) designing the appropriate training program based on these needs, (c) conducting the training, and (d) evaluating the training to determine its effectiveness. When designing the training program, several factors should be considered, including the time commitment, facilities needed, and equipment and materials required. It may be appropriate for the director to work with an orientation advisory committee, comprised of students, faculty, and administrators particularly if the needs of all the groups are to be addressed. Orientation leaders are well advised to have student, faculty, and administrative representation on the advisory committee.

One of the most critical parts of a successful orientation program is being sure that the staff members are trained properly and thoroughly.

Several institutions offer a training class for orientation leaders. Of those that offer a class, some give academic credit while for others it is just a required component of the training process. One of the most critical parts of a successful orientation program is ensuring that the staff members are trained properly and thoroughly. Obviously there is no way that one individual, the director, can meet with the hundreds or thousands of people that come to orientation programs during the summer or the fall. The student orientation leaders are the ones who will be "in the trenches," the ones who will share information and respond to questions. Therefore, it is important that they know the proper way of communicating information to prospective students and their parents; it is important that they have good communication skills; it is important that they understand the services the college or university offers and can make appropriate referrals; it is important that they have the opportunity to meet and visit with deans, department heads, vice presidents, and even the president; and it is important that they come together as a team, each one supporting the other.

The student orientation staff must know the standards and values of the orientation program, and they must see those standards and values throughout the entire orientation experience. With careful thought, the orientation director will be able to select and train a staff which will understand this and make the institution very proud.

Funding Orientation Programs

In the current era of severe and growing constraints on program funding in higher education, it is apparent that those programs that will be funded are (a) those that have engaged in planning and have integrated those plans into the institutional planning process, and (b) those that have

developed and implemented assessment strategies that successfully link program planning not only to program effectiveness, but also to program outcomes, especially retention. Orientation programs, perceived by some as "fun and games" may be placed in a defensive posture budgetarily if a solid case for support is not made. What are the needs of an orientation program? What methods of funding currently exist? How can one build a case for program support? These issues will be addressed in this section. It is important to note at the outset that funding needs vary considerably from institution to institution depending on size of school, length and timing of orientation program, housing and food service needs, comprehensiveness of program, size of professional and student staff, and other factors.

Orientation Program Expenses

"The student orientation program must have funding that is sufficient to carry out its mission and to support the following, where applicable: staff salaries; purchase and maintenance of office furnishing, supplies, materials, and equipment, including current technology; phone and postage costs; printing and media costs; institutional memberships in appropriate professional organizations; relevant subscriptions and necessary library resources; attendance at professional association meetings, conferences, and workshops; and other professional development activities" (CAS, 1988, p. 24).

The CAS standards clearly articulate a need for adequate funding for very specific items. Staff salaries include those of a program director, clerical support staff, as well as student orientation leaders, and others employed by the program. Of course there must be an office with adequate space, furnishings, and equipment. Printing, phone, and postage costs can be extremely high depending on a number of factors; for example, institutions often see orientation as an extension of their recruitment efforts. As a result, it is imperative that brochures and other materials sent to incoming students are professional in their appearance and format. In addition, materials must be sent to all admitted students—often thousands more than will actually enroll. For some institutions, provision of a toll-free, 800-number telephone service is very appealing to customers. Decisions must also be made about whether to send materials bulk rate or first class. Postage costs increase with follow-up correspondence such as confirmation notices.

Other routine orientation-related expenses include the cost of such items as nametags, pencils, packet folders, directional signs, evaluation forms, and so forth. Other program costs include media (slide, video, and other types of presentations), entertainment (disk jockeys, bands, games, transportation), and paraphernalia (t-shirts or other give away items). Rental of campus facilities can include room rentals, set-up, and clean-up charges. One of the areas of tremendous expense for many programs is overnight housing and food. Another big ticket item is staff training. Student orientation leaders generally receive considerable training which can be expensive, especially if travel costs to regional meetings are

associated with the training program. In addition, professional development and the costs associated with it must not be overlooked. "The student orientation program must . . . provide continuing professional development opportunities for staff including in-service training programs, participation in professional conferences, workshops, and other continuing education activities" (CAS, 1988, p. 23).

Not only do student orientation programs require funding, programs for parents, family, spouses, and others have become extremely sophisticated in their design and implementation and involve considerable expenses. This list and discussion is not meant to be all inclusive. Every program is unique and has costs specific to that program.

Methods of Funding

"In addition to institutional funding commitment through general funds, other funding sources may be considered including: state appropriations, student fees, user fees, donations and contributions, fines, concession and store sales, rentals, and dues" (CAS, 1988, p. 24). Implicit in the above standards statement is the notion that institutional funding is mandated as at least a base of program operation. Orientation directors must employ a variety of methods for securing the funding necessary to direct a quality, comprehensive orientation program.

One of the advantages of directing an orientation program is the opportunity to interact with a multitude of internal and external constituencies. Within those interactions are excellent opportunities to supplement traditional funding sources for orientation programs. Although the listing and explanations which follow are certainly not all inclusive, the reader should be able to gain an adequate number of creative ideas for new ways to fund orientation.

One of the advantages of directing an orientation program is the opportunity to interact with a multitude of internal and external constituencies. Within those interactions are excellent opportunities to supplement traditional funding sources for orientation programs.

Institutional budget/general funds. As noted in the CAS standards, institutional commitment of resources to orientation is imperative. These funds do more than any other source to indicate the value of the program to the institution. At the very least, wherever possible, professional and clerical staff salaries should be covered by these funds, in addition to basic program support, including supplies, equipment, furnishings, and room rental charges.

Student, user, or matriculation fees. Many institutions rely heavily on student fee income for support of several campus programs including orientation. Use of general student fees is acceptable, but user and/or matriculation fees are more appropriate because of the definable nature of the population served. User fees are generally tied directly to program expenses and are meant to recoup specific program costs such as room, board, t-shirts, and student staff salaries. This type of fee is paid only by those students who actually participate in the program and is often

collected by the orientation office. (Whenever possible, fees should be collected through an institutional billing process.) A matriculation fee is a set fee charged to all new students whether or not they participate in orientation and the funds are collected in the billing process and allocated to orientation and occasionally other programs.

Internal donations/contributions. Several funding sources exist on campus that can provide tremendous financial support for the program and visibility for the donor. The office of the chancellor/president is a good source for a sponsorship of an orientation event such as a student/parent/faculty/administration reception or picnic. An organized parents council or alumni council is another excellent source for funding for a parent handbook or a reception during the program. The student government association is often a willing contributor, especially if it is allowed to sponsor an event and if the association president is allowed to provide a student welcome during a general session. Other groups seeking visibility (who are often willing to pay for it) with freshmen and other new students include ROTC, student activities organizations, and Greek organizations.

External donations and contributions. Colleges and universities have considerable economic impact on the communities in which they are located. Many businesses specifically target and depend on the student population, and they are anxious to get an early and clear shot at the new students. Orientation staff can capitalize on this phenomenon to the benefit of both businesses and the orientation budget. For programs that attract large numbers of students from great distances, deals can be made (for tickets or cash) with airline companies. Computer companies seeking the student market may contribute large donations in exchange for their name on the orientation t-shirt. Banks can sponsor receptions and have representatives on hand to assist students and parents in opening accounts. Fast food outlets are often willing to feed large numbers of students for free. For example, they can provide breakfast biscuits, coffee, and juice at orientation check-in. Soft drink companies will often set up booths and keep them supplied throughout a program or series of programs. The opportunities for local businesses are endless; however, caution should be exercised regarding the marketing of items such as alcoholic beverages during an orientation program. In addition, it is wise to secure the approval of the institution's development or advancement office before approaching specific local businesses.

Advertising. Opportunities to generate revenue for orientation programs through advertising exist internally and externally. A special orientation issue of the school paper can be produced with advertising revenues (beyond actual printing costs) designated to orientation. This process allows the newspaper staff to showcase the paper, seek assistance for future issues, and provide a service and funds for orientation. Externally, local companies are often willing to provide materials for free (such as local maps), to advertise on orientation materials (such as packets), or to provide necessary services at no cost (city bus transportation).

Fund raising. Campus student organizations often rely on fund raising efforts to survive or to meet the matching revenue requirements established by their student government associations. The student orientation leaders can become a registered student organization, thus allowing them the privilege of campus fund raising. Bake sales, car washes, and raffles can generate needed funds for training and especially for travel to a regional orientation conference.

Grants. External grants are often overlooked as sources of funding. Program funds can be sought from agencies, foundations, corporations, and associations to provide programming in areas such as substance abuse, AIDS, and leadership.

Cost cutting measures. Another way to generate revenue is to cut costs. Orientation professionals should learn everything possible about budgeting, fund raising, and cost containment. One of the ways of keeping costs low is to exercise sound fiscal management and to reduce operating costs. In addition to supplementing the institution's funding by implementing the above ideas and keeping costs low through appropriate budgeting practices, orientation professionals may consider using graduate and/or undergraduate interns and/or practicum students to staff their programs.

Building and Maintaining Budget Support

> "Probably the most important move an institution can make to increase student persistence to graduation is to ensure that students receive the guidance they need at the beginning of the journey through college to graduation" (Forrest, 1982, p. 44).
>
> "The practical question remains as to where and in what form should institutions invest scarce resources to enhance student retention? Here the evidence of effective programs is clear, namely that the practical route to successful retention lies in those programs that ensure, from the very outset of contact with the institution, that entering students are integrated into the social and academic communities of the college and acquire the skills and knowledge needed to become successful learners in those communities" (Tinto, 1990, p. 44).

These quotes provide a powerful message regarding institutional funding for orientation programs. A comprehensive orientation program goes far beyond "fun and games." A properly administered orientation program focuses as much, if not more, on the academic transition students face as it does on the personal/social transition. Unfortunately, the social events and games (which are important and do occur) are often more visible to the broader academic community. At one institution, students are transported (five miles) to the beach for dinner and relaxation at the end of the first day of the summer orientation program. Prior to this event, the program includes check-in, an introductory/ice breaker session, a general/opening session, a math placement test, an English placement test, a foreign language placement test, and a lengthy (1 1/2 hour) session on

academic success. However, the beach event is often criticized as setting an inappropriate tone and expectation for new students. The beach event has been criticized for receiving live television coverage and other media exposure. The irony is that the beach event was designed to stop the problem of students skipping out on the important academic components of the program to go to the beach on their own.

Orientation professionals will occasionally find themselves in a defensive posture as they attempt to make a case for budget support. "Orientation must have the support and involvement of the entire campus community, including faculty, staff, students, and especially the central administration. They must all understand how important orientation is to freshman success, and provide appropriate support through participation and contribution of resources" (Perigo & Upcraft, 1989, p. 84).

In order to build and/or maintain budget support for a comprehensive orientation program, it is critical that representatives from throughout the campus be involved in its planning, implementation, and evaluation. This involvement can make allies of enemies and broaden the base of support. In order to ensure this support, it is recommended that the orientation professional develop an orientation advisory group and focus on three primary orientation functions.

First, as noted by Mullendore and Biller in Chapter 13 of this monograph, every orientation program should have the CAS standards in place. The implementation and review processes should involve a large number of individuals from throughout the institution such as the aforementioned orientation advisory committee. This process can establish program credibility. Second, group involvement is necessary for the planning of the orientation program. Smith and Brackin (Chapter 4) list and explain the rationale for a variety of components that should be included in orientation. The orientation advisory committee can be especially helpful in the development of a program, and the members can serve as ambassadors to articulate the academic nature of the program as well as the need for personal/social experiences. Third, the orientation program must be evaluated by participants and others and the results distributed widely throughout the institution. The committee can assist in the design of the evaluations and the dissemination of the results.

Representatives to this group should be carefully selected in order to ensure both a broad base of support and political/economic clout. The literature is clear regarding the need to support new student experiences of which orientation is key. The related budgetary process, however, is often difficult, and orientation staff must be constantly prepared to state and restate their case.

Summary

This chapter has provided insights regarding administrative placement of orientation within the institutional hierarchy, discussion of the multitude of considerations that must be addressed in staffing orientation, and

advice on building and maintaining budgetary support for orientation programs.

Orientation has recently received increased attention and scrutiny due to research indicating that comprehensive orientation and advising programs positively influence student retention. At the same time, the CAS standards have provided a credible vehicle for comparing, assessing, and improving orientation efforts. Administratively, in institutions of all sizes, orientation has been and is generally a student affairs function. In medium and large institutions, there is a trend toward allocating professional staff to the program on a full-time basis. Unfortunately, in spite of the emphasis on retention, complexities of the position, and the knowledge and skills required, orientation is still, by many, considered to be at an entry-level position. The authors recommend that the orientation professional not be entry-level unless previous experiences and/or current supervision can provide the necessary knowledge and skills to perform this vital function successfully. Regarding organizational placement of the orientation function, the authors provide two recommendations: 1) that institutions undertake an internal program assessment using the CAS standards, and 2) that the orientation function report through the division of student affairs, or where appropriate, through the office of enrollment management.

In staffing an orientation program, several variables must be considered including the type of institution, the population(s) served, the type of orientation program(s) offered, the facilities that are available, the needs of families as well as students, program funding, and so forth. Orientation programs generally use professional staff, clerical support, and staff and faculty from throughout the college or university. The interaction that incoming students have with faculty and staff can be a critical element in student retention. In addition, one of the most important components in a successful orientation program is the student orientation leader. The selection and training of a high quality, enthusiastic cadre of students greatly enhances an orientation program while providing a wonderful leadership experience for the leaders themselves.

Receiving appropriate funding for orientation programs is crucial, and it is important that an ongoing institutional commitment be made to provide most of the necessary resources. However, orientation professionals have several avenues available for seeking supplementary funds through student fees, donations (internal and external), advertising, fund-raising, and grants.

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7

Orienting Diverse Populations

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Increasingly, a highly diverse student population is now entering our colleges and, at the same time, institutions are placing a greater emphasis on student retention and student success. If we are to provide programs which enable students to make an effective transition to our institutions, we must first understand the diverse populations on our campuses. This chapter will discuss the trends toward diversity, some diverse populations typically found on college campuses, and some approaches toward the individualization of various student groups.

The Need for Special Programming in Orientation

At one time, orientation was planned primarily with the traditionally-aged, full-time, residential undergraduate in mind. In recent years, however, the demographics on college campuses in the United States have changed. These changes, in turn, have altered orientation programming. Fluctuating economic conditions, federally-funded student aid programs, the maturation of the baby-boomers, the change in gender role expectations, the replacement of an industrial society with an information society, the G.I. Bill, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the American Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act have all had an impact on the numbers and types of students entering college. Nationwide, almost 8% of beginning freshmen are 20 years old or older (and many institutions will have much larger percentages). Almost 10% of beginning freshmen have a disability, 40% commute or live off-campus, and 17% are minority students (This Year's College Freshmen, 1992). In addition, entering students include such diverse groups as international students, graduate students, transfer students, student athletes, academically disadvantaged students, veterans, students with disabilities, gay/lesbian/bisexual students, and honors students. "Diversity within the student population is now more commonplace on campus, and it will eventually become the norm rather than the exception as we continue to

experience the decrease in the number of high-school-aged individuals available to attend college" (Nadler, 1992, p. 33).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/ Development Programs' (CAS) charge for orientation to "aid new students in their transition into the institution" (1988, p. 21) provides particular responsibility for the orientation of diverse populations. "All too often student affairs professionals justify programs and policies by their current menu of programs rather than by any documented evidence of the developmental needs of students" (Jacobs, 1988, p. 145). Understanding the diverse needs of students is crucial in providing the opportunity for their successful transition to college. Declining enrollments have spawned a new emphasis on student transition, retention, and satisfaction, and orientation is the natural pacesetter for the institution's commitment to student success. Getting off to a good start, both academically and socially, is important for the improvement of student retention, and orientation should be a crucial component of every enrollment management program that is serious about student success. Yet, the most dazzling of programs, the sharpest of speakers, the most detailed agenda, or the strongest of academic resources cannot ensure student success without an understanding of and appreciation for the diverse backgrounds from which our students come. Campus individualization of orientation programs provides the mechanism for transmitting to students the institution's concern that each one of them, regardless of background, succeeds academically, learns leadership skills, develops interpersonal skills, makes lifestyle choices, and graduates. Understanding who our students are and adjusting to their unique needs have become perhaps the most challenging items on the orientation agenda in the next decade. Furthermore, each institution has a different student composition, and the orientation director must be cognizant of the campus student profile in order to facilitate effective programs.

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Some Diverse Populations

It is important to note that all diverse populations cannot be lumped together, and each will have unique problems and will be at risk for different reasons. The goal of the orientation director should be to help students feel they "fit" the institution. Following is a list of some diverse populations and an explanation of why each might need particular attention during the orientation period.

Ethnic Minority Students

Minority students, as much as any other diverse group, are at risk in part because of "extreme alienation, culture shock, and feelings of powerlessness over one's life, all of which result from displacement from known and comfortable environments into situations that are, in some cases,

dramatically different" (Dearing, 1984, p. 475). Green (1990) reports these facts about minority students:

- Higher education's pool of students is increasingly made up of minority youth.
- College attendance by black students has slowed; the gap in participation between whites and blacks is growing.
- The rate of college attendance for Hispanic youths has declined during the last decade.
- College attendance by American Indian students lags far behind black and Hispanic attendance.
- Minority students are concentrated in community colleges.
- Black and Hispanic students are far less likely than white students to complete a degree.
- Blacks attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are more likely to complete a degree than those attending predominantly white institutions.
- Black and Hispanic participation in graduate and professional education can best be described as minuscule in the areas of math and science. (pp. 2-3)

Yet, 30% to 40% of all public school students will belong to ethnic minority groups in the year 2020 (American Council on Education, 1988). Coupled with the impact of an ever-increasing mobility in our society and an emphasis on securing a strong minority presence on our campuses, these factors will create even more heterogeneous campuses. Yet, minorities' "access [to higher education] without orientation is worse than no access at all, for it will further alienate and frustrate already oppressed young adults" (Wright, 1984, p. 64). "Institutions that have had the most success with support services [including orientation] find that they assist minority students in both their academic and social adaptation to the institution" (Green, 1990, p. 37).

The current *NODA Data Bank* (Strumpf, 1991) indicates that 44% of reporting institutions and 62% of those institutions with more than 15,000 students provide some type of special programming for minority students. This is an increase from 37% of the reporting institutions and 59% of the over-15,000-students category reported in the 1986-87 edition of the *NODA Data Bank* (Strumpf & Brown, 1987). This special programming often takes the form of a workshop in conjunction with student orientation but may also appear as a separate and distinct program in place of the traditional year-long continuing orientation activity. Some useful tools proven effective include using peer helpers, providing direct academic support services, openly addressing issues, and involving professional staff (Hughes, 1990; McPhee, 1990).

We should not discount the fact that white students who are a minority on an Historically Black College or University or other campus predominated by a different ethnic group have specific needs of their own. Even though white students tend not to view themselves as a minority group since they lose their minority label as soon as they set foot off campus,

there are still issues to discuss and stereotypes to break down. The transition will be smoother and the anxiety level reduced if the issue of minority status is addressed openly and candidly. Many white students on an HBCU, however, feel "that any special orientation for white students [is] unnecessary" (Institute for Higher Educational Opportunity, 1973, p. 8), and special strategies might need to be employed by the orientation director to assure their participation.

Gender Minority Students

On some campuses, the male/female ratio might be so one-sided that the smaller group might be considered a gender minority. These students will need encouragement to become involved in campus activities, a factor which positively correlates with student retention (Nelson, Scott, & Bryan, 1984). Miville and Sedlacek (1991) reviewed research that found some evidence that women react differently from men when placed in predominantly male colleges, and that women tend either to overachieve or perform at mediocre levels. In addition, women in predominantly male institutions are often faced with "chilly" classroom climates, peer pressure for gender conformity, and a lack of female role models (Ehrhart & Sandler, 1990).

It is important to note that, aside from the issue of orienting a minority gender, there are fundamental differences in learning approaches between men and women. Generally, "men are at higher risk academically and are in greater need of academic counseling and assistance than women are . . . . [while] men seem to have a slightly better profile of learning styles and approaches than do women" (Miller, Finley, & McKinley, 1990, p. 153). Men and women "have different strengths as well as different weaknesses with regard to learning approaches and motives" (Miller et al., 1990, p. 152). Women are more organized, more able to integrate new information, more intrinsically motivated, more strategic in their approach, and more sensitive to the expectations of instructors. Men, on the other hand, are more able to learn by comprehension and evidence, are more achievement motivated, and more inclined to a deep-process and deep-approach style of learning. Negative traits for women include their tendency to rely on surface approaches (skimming, memorizing unrelated facts, etc.), to demonstrate a greater fear of failure, and to express fewer educational goals. Men experience difficulty most often because of attitudes of "just barely getting by" and of negative feelings about the school (Miller et al., 1990).

The orientation director must place special emphasis on minimizing the probable negative traits of the minority gender while emphasizing the strengths. For example, the orientation director might concentrate on the affective concerns such as fear of failure and goal-setting behaviors when dealing with a female minority, while stressing organization and time management skills when orienting a male minority group. When orienting female minorities, additional time should be spent discussing such issues as physical safety, date rape, and women's health problems. Regardless of the strategies and format employed, it is important to realize

that a gender minority may face different challenges than the rest of the incoming students.

Student Athletes

Athletes have a unique set of adjustments which must be addressed early in their college careers. On the one hand, "athletes— particularly those from revenue-producing sports such as football and basketball— tend to have lower levels of career maturity and less clarity in educational and occupational plans than do nonathletes" (Pascarella & Smart, 1991, p. 123). On the other hand, "athletic participation may increase motivation to complete one's degree and persistence in college" (Pascarella & Smart, 1991, p. 123). The athlete is at a higher risk of experiencing developmental crises and psychological distress than is the general student population (Smallman, Sowa, & Young, 1991), and athletes often have lower records of high school achievement and lower aptitude test scores, especially those who are participating in revenue-producing sports (Hood, Craig, & Ferguson, 1992). They often experience more feelings of isolation (Smallman et al., 1991), possess a lack of career and educational planning skills (Sowa & Gressard, 1983), and have a lack of realistic goal-setting strategies and self confidence outside of athletics (Wilkes, Davis, & Dever, 1989). Despite these difficulties, athletes tend to perform academically in a manner similar to nonathletes who mirror their high school records and achievement/aptitude entrance scores (Hood et al., 1992), in large part because of the academic advising, support, and tutoring provided them. In the past "successful student athletes have frequently defined themselves primarily through success in their sport. Currently, college athletes are also faced with the need to identify themselves as students if they are to remain competitive in the classroom. Some athletes find this is the most difficult adjustment, for they have never been motivated by the pleasures that can be gained from learning for learning's sake" (Nadler, 1992, p. 35).

It is particularly important for the orientation director to understand the difficulties faced by the student athlete and to provide the expertise to initiate the student athletes' orientation to college. Cooperative efforts with the special academic assistance programs provided by the athletic department will further enhance the efforts. In addition to the programs provided by the athletic department, orientation should also provide an insight into the overall campus life. It is important to present the programs with an already-gained understanding of the athlete's time demands for practices, games, and team commitments. Their heightened visibility and the pressures of being in the public eye, their often underpreparation for college and lack of career planning skills, and their tendency toward feelings of isolation and lack of self-confidence outside of athletics all contribute to the uniqueness of athletes. According to Gunn & Eddy (1989), there are appropriate niches in college athletic programs where student services/orientation professionals can help athletes avoid the hazards of being athletes. Encouragement and support, academic support services, residential counselors, a personal development course, a senior exit seminar, freshman testing to determine appro-

priate levels of remediation, study skills training, advising and registration, workshops, peer mentors, research and evaluation, and group counseling are all useful tools for the student services professional in assisting the student athlete.

In addition, there are some differences which should be noted between male and female athletes and African-American and white athletes:

> As women's sports receive more support and the added extrinsic motivator of scholarships, women and men may face comparable challenges. Male and female athletes, however, may respond differently to comparable stressful life events. . . . The interaction of gender with athletic pressures may, therefore, produce gender-specific patterns of distress. . . . [Also,] black student-athletes on predominantly white campuses may encounter feelings of isolation as a result of both ethnicity and student-athlete status. These feelings may place black student-athletes at higher risk for psychological distress and hinder their ability to accomplish developmental tasks. (Smallman et al., p. 231)

International Students

The number of international students enrolled in U. S. colleges and universities is increasing. There were 340,000 international students enrolled during the 1983-84 academic year, 365,000 enrolled in the 1988-89 academic year, and more than 400,000 will be enrolled each academic year in the 1990s (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; NAFSA, 1991; Parr, Bradley, & Bingi, 1992). International students have much to offer a campus community; yet, they often face a number of transitional problems ranging from homesickness, adjustment problems, loneliness, and depression to academics, finances, and separation from families (Wehrly, 1988).

International students at times demonstrate distrust of host students, an excessive concern over health, hostility toward others, and lowered work performance, all of which should be seen as symptoms of the culture shock they face (Brislin, 1981). "Academic success is imperative [for international students]; failure is not an option for most of these young people because they feel enormous pressures from their families or their own governments to succeed in the disciplines in which they have been sent to study. Few of these students have had free choice selection of their academic major" (Wehrly, 1988, pp. 4-5).

There are a number of inherent difficulties in providing an effective orientation program for international students including their erratic arrival times, their uneven motivation to participate, their diverse preoccupations, the wide range of English proficiency among entering international students, and difficulty in evaluating orientation programs (National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, 1980). An understanding that each international student is unique even within his or her own culture is important for the orientation director. The orientation programs for international students should be distinct from those provided the general student population and might need to be delayed for a week

or two into the semester to include late arrivals. International students may encounter daily "problems": (a) in the residence hall (Artman, 1986); (b) with finances, especially when bringing spouses and children with them to this country (Neuberger, 1992); (c) in understanding the structure of the university system; (d) in academics; and (e) in student services (National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, 1980). Some topics which might be included in an orientation program for international students are a discussion of regulations such as insurance requirements and immigration responsibilities, an opportunity for international students to interact with American students, and tips on basic day-to-day living on an American college campus.

Honors Students

Honors students have "unique characteristics that affect the ways they choose educational directions, plan careers, and later adjust to work environments" (Gordon, 1983, p. 82). Although they typically rank in the top ten percent of their high school graduation class and obtain superior scores on college admission exams, they often drop out of college despite earning high grades (Day, 1990). A number of factors may be involved in this, not least of which are adjustments to campus and individual self-esteem. Some honors students need to improve study habits and skills while others need to develop more tolerance and acceptance of others. "With perfectionist tendencies and high expectations, they need to know how to deal with anxiety, stress, overwork, and underconfidence" (Day, 1990, p. 354).

Thus, it is sometimes wise to consider honors students as a diverse group when planning their orientations so that special motivations, resources, and career patterns might be given more in-depth consideration than with the general orientation program. Some of the issues to be incorporated into a program for honors students include: (a) their potential to succeed in a number of areas thus creating a need for increased career exploration; (b) pressures faced in larger degree by honors students to choose career options based on opinions expressed by significant others; (c) self-discovery and values clarification in order to narrow choices more effectively; and (d) information to avoid career stereotyping so that the honors student makes decisions based on his/her potential, values, and interests rather than on gender or ethnic roles (Gordon, 1983). The thoroughness required for such activities almost certainly requires the honors orientation to be an on-going semester project, perhaps in cooperation with the director of the honors program.

Students With Disabilities

The passage of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) of 1973, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 have all influenced the number of students with disabilities who have entered colleges. The number of students who identify themselves as disabled has grown from 2.6% in 1978 and 7.4% in 1985 (Dillard, 1989) to 9.9% in 1992 (This Year's College Freshmen, 1992).

The increase in the numbers of students with disabilities (both learning disabilities and physical disabilities) has underscored the need for an effective, individualized orientation to the college campus.

Of course, one of the requisites of all orientation programs is sensitivity to the accommodations needed by students and parents attending the program. Participants should be invited to request assistance as needed including sign-language interpreters for students or guests with hearing impairments, large-print or brailled materials for students or guests with visual impairments, and room locations which are accessible to mobility-impaired students or guests. However, orientation for students with disabilities goes beyond these basic accommodations. A helpful orientation entails more than an absence of discrimination.

Students considered to have a disability are those "with a physical or mental impairment (has a history of such a condition, or perceived by others to be disabled) that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, speech, hearing, visual and mobility impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, AIDS, mental retardation, emotional illness, and specific learning disabilities such as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction, and developmental aphasia" (Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education, 1990). Students with disabilities form a diverse, multifaceted population, and a single-minded orientation program may shortchange one or more subpopulations. "As a general rule students with disabilities are more like able-bodied students than unlike them" (Hameister, 1984, p. 69). Yet, they are often different from one another in their backgrounds, concerns, and strengths. Thus, students with disabilities may be much like the general student body in terms of their primary needs but have very specific, individual secondary needs.

Students with disabilities "face being treated differently and are often not expected to perform as well as their peers" (Nadler, 1992, p. 35). They are generally older, less academically prepared for higher education, and have lower high school class standing (Dillard, 1989). Students with disabilities must at times compensate for deficiencies in secondary school preparation and, at the same time, adjust to an environment unplanned for their special needs.

Among students with disabilities, the fastest-growing sub-group is that of students with learning disabilities. These students have "grown up" with Section 504 and are generally aware of their legal rights and are able to articulate their concerns. However, because the disability is not seen, it is usually more difficult to elicit support from faculty members, and students with disabilities are sometimes labeled lazy or incapable. "It is important to assist these students in understanding their specific learning styles and in recognizing compensatory strategies for dealing with the

challenges of postsecondary education" (McGuire, Hall, & Litt, 1991, p. 101).

An orientation program for students with disabilities should encompass all of the above concerns and should be individualized for their unique needs. The components an orientation program for student with disabilities should encompass are:

- *Awareness of accommodations and resources available to students with disabilities.* Students should understand the appropriate channels for requesting services as well as the expectations the institution has of the student.
- *The importance of self-advocation.* Although support services personnel monitor the adherence of an institution's response to legal mandates, students should also be taught how to advocate for themselves in order to ease both their college careers and their later job experiences.
- *Strategies for success in the classroom.* Often, students with disabilities must make adjustments to improve their chances for academic success. For example, students may find that spacing class times and limiting class load are helpful to assure their success. Specific accommodations must be determined for each class.
- *An assurance of the institution's commitment to providing accommodations.* It is important that the student not feel in an adversarial position with the institution, but rather have an understanding that "reasonable accommodations" will be provided in a timely manner.

Commuting Students

Commuting students are often separated from the overall campus community and are frequently in the shadows of college life (Dillard, 1989). The obvious challenge of providing an effective orientation program is to find a time and place which will encourage the support and participation of commuting students. In addition to living off-campus, many commuting students are also nontraditional students, and "services must be provided at times that nontraditional students would be able to utilize them, specifically at night and on weekends" (Johnson & Pritchard, 1989, p. 28). Many commuting students have commitments to work, school, and family and, consequently, "find it unappealing to devote a considerable amount of time attending orientation sessions" (Mannan & Preusz, 1983, p. 3).

On many campuses, most recreational, social, cultural, and even academic extracurricular activities are planned around the residential students. Boyer (1987) illustrates the distinction between the two groups by citing a quote from a student newspaper:

> Commuters talk about their kids. Dorm students talk about how much beer they drank the night before. Commuters dress as if they were going to the office. A dorm student's wardrobe consists

> of bluejeans, sweatpants, and T-shirts. Commuter students have trouble finding a parking space every morning. Dorm students have trouble finding matching socks. When class is over, dorm students attend club meetings, act as campus hosts and hostesses, make posters for special events, play intramural sports and pursue a variety of other activities. Commuters go home. . . . (p. 210)

Many commuting students are first-generation college students who also tend to be late applying for admission to college (Mannan & Preusz, 1983). Thus, a large percentage of commuting students may be underprepared for college, and the orientation director may not receive their applications until late into the orientation season. Planning an orientation strategy for commuting students, particularly when considering the various types of students within the commuting population, may require adjusting the time when orientation may be offered and/or the length of sessions. Specific topics should be determined according to the profile of commuter students and their potential for difficulties in adjustment, either academically or socially, to the campus community.

Nontraditional/Adult Students

The number of adult learners (students 25 years or older) in institutions of higher education increased from 28% in 1970 to 42% in 1985 (Center for Educational Statistics, 1987). They are single, married, widowed, divorced, employed, unemployed, male, female, veterans, homemakers, parents, grandparents, part-time students, full-time students, freshmen, and transfers. Despite their diversity, adult learners also have numerous similarities. Most have part-time or full-time jobs, usually have family responsibilities of some sort, often have been away from formal education for a number of years, and typically have concerns about studying, managing time, writing papers, taking tests, and coping with campus life (Copland, 1989). One study found reentry women were concerned about identifying a campus support group, finding time to fulfill personal responsibilities, feeling academically competent to meet college course requirements, and attaining high grades (Flynn, Vanderpool, & Brown, 1989). A separate study of students who were single parents found concerns about social and academic support, stress management, and help with practical matters such as choosing an appropriate school program for their children (McLeod & Vonk, 1992).

Despite their diversity, adult learners also have numerous similarities. Most have part-time or full-time jobs, usually have family responsibilities of some sort, often have been away from formal education for a number of years, and typically have concerns about studying, managing time, writing papers, taking tests, and coping with campus life

Greenfeig and Goldberg (1984) made four assumptions about providing services for the adult population: (a) multiple approaches are necessary; (b) interactions with other returning students are necessary; (c) information and support are key components; and (d) coordinated approaches are needed. They also suggest six strategies for year-long orientation services for the adult student: (a) orientation courses for returning students; (b) workshops; (c)

peer counselors who are also adult students; (d) individual counseling, information, and referral services; (e) informal social activities; and (f) returning students organizations (pp. 86-88).

Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Students

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students should be "viewed as minority populations and given the same consideration that students of color, older/returning students, and physically challenged students are given" (Malkin, 1992, pp. 49-50). This population, however, is often not comfortable with self-identification upon entrance into college, making it difficult for the orientation director to provide special programming during the initial orientation period. During orientation, all students can be given a list of: (a) resource groups such as gay/lesbian/bisexual organizations, (b) programs such as Awareness Week, and (c) support persons such as a list of gay/lesbian/bisexual "allies." As entering students become more comfortable with disclosure, programming for the gay/lesbian/bisexual population should be in place for them. In the meantime, acceptance of gay/lesbian/bisexual students by the heterosexual population and self-acceptance for gay/lesbian/bisexual students are issues which should be addressed to the entire student population as part of the orientation agenda. Sexual orientation issues should certainly be included as part of the training for student orientation leaders.

In surveying the various groups of students which may be participating in an orientation program, it becomes obvious that each orientation director must determine the composition of new students entering the institution and assess their needs. The mission of the institution and the goals of orientation should be carefully reviewed in order to allocate often-scarce orientation resources to the most-needed areas.

Strategies for Orienting Diverse Populations

In surveying the various groups of students which may be participating in an orientation program, it becomes obvious that each orientation director must determine the composition of new students entering the institution and assess their needs. The mission of the institution and the goals of orientation should be carefully reviewed in order to allocate often-scarce orientation resources to the most-needed areas. There are several types of adjustments to orientation which best serve the various populations, and it is important to determine the most appropriate direction to take with each group. Following is a list of some of the individualization which may be made with student groups.

Separate Programs

A separate orientation program provided for a specific group of students may be warranted if there is a student population widely recognized to be "at risk" more than other student groups. For example, minority students may face particular difficulties in adjusting and succeeding on a predominantly white campus. A special orientation program not only can provide greater detail on academic regulations, student development, and minority student affairs resources available to them, but also can help minority

students become better acquainted with one another and build a much-needed peer support group.

International students can often benefit from a separate orientation program. International students, because they must become adjusted to a new country and a new culture in addition to other college adjustments, frequently have transition difficulties not found in other student groups. An orientation program for international students usually includes immigration regulations, a list of locations to purchase ethnic foods, traffic laws, housing between semesters, and other pragmatic issues not generally relevant to any other orientation group.

Extended Programs

All student orientation should be extended, in some form, throughout the freshman year. However, some student groups may need to have an extended orientation program geared especially to their individual needs. Extended programs are ideally a year-long endeavor, but may also be effective as a workshop held in addition to the regular orientation program, usually immediately preceding or following the regular orientation program.

An example of a year-long orientation program already found on many campuses is the program for the student athlete. Study halls, developmental programs, time-management seminars, gender issues, and lifestyle selections are appropriate topics for an extended orientation program for student athletes. Increased pressures unique to their high level of visibility should be addressed, and an extended program provides an appropriate forum for such discussions.

Honors students comprise another group for which a special extended orientation is often scheduled. Seminars are sometimes a part of the honors program, and an assessment of their orientation needs and implementation of developmental programming are efficient ways to provide extended orientation for these students.

Other groups that would benefit from an extended orientation, either as a year-long activity or as an additional workshop, are those which tend to face new difficulties as the semesters progress or have particularly low retention rates. The obvious obstacle to extended orientations for any group is the number of resource personnel available to these students. If resource personnel can be found, nontraditional students, students with disabilities, and minority students are examples of groups which would benefit greatly from extended contact.

Schedule Revisions

Because student lifestyles are so varied, the orientation director cannot have the luxury of assuming that typical working hours or even "typical orientation hours" are acceptable for all students. Students who work part-time or full-time, students who have families, and students who

commute are obvious examples of those who need orientation schedule revisions. Nontraditional/adult students do not fit the common mindset about students, and their orientation needs do not fit the most widely-used approach to orientation: one to five days and nights of packed orientation events.

Revisions in orientation and registration may take the form of night orientation, weekend orientation, or both, and might also include relocating orientation to an off-campus site more convenient for the participants. Often, because there is so much variation in the needs of married, working, or commuting students, one orientation "time" may not be enough. Some working students can only attend orientation during day hours, some only during evening hours, and some only during weekend hours. On campuses with a significant nontraditional population, child-care options must be explored and, if possible, made available on a gratis or cost basis. Time spent in orientation sessions must be streamlined as much as possible in order to cover all the necessary topics while also freeing participants to meet their outside time demands.

Another approach to orientation revisions may be needed with international students. Since it is not uncommon for new international students to arrive on campus after the first day of classes, it may become necessary to delay orientation for international students or to offer an early orientation program followed by an orientation session for late arrivals.

Break-Away Sessions

There are a number of instances when break-away sessions (i.e., separating students with particular needs from the group-at-large and/or separating all participants into small groups based upon interests or needs) during regular orientation may be appropriate for certain populations. For example, some campuses may feel that students with disabilities will benefit most from the regular sessions but also need a time to explore additional resources, and/or to meet with specially-trained academic advisors.

Another example of the valid use of break-away sessions is for white students on a historically black campus. Since these students have unique needs but do not see themselves as needing a special orientation program, perhaps the time necessary to address the resources available to them might be found in a single break-away session.

Almost any other special student group can benefit from a break-away session provided there is enough interest to persuade their attendance. It is a particularly productive approach for those student groups who have unique needs but who do not warrant (either because of lack of numbers or level of needs) a separate or extended program. The orientation director must evaluate, however, whether a break-away session will cause unnecessary disruptions to the overall program. One approach is to have break-away sessions for all students and to include sessions for groups such as minority students, commuting students, and students with

disabilities along with sessions on topics such as campus involvement, living in a residence hall, campus safety, and financial management. It is important, however, that multiple time slots be provided so that, for example, a commuting student is able to also attend the session on campus safety.

Summary

As noted by Upcraft in Chapter 1, there has been a tremendous increase in the diversity of students entering college. At one time, commuting students, transfer students, and nontraditional students were considered special students because of their uniqueness to a campus. The influx of these groups in record numbers has drawn attention to their importance, both in terms of student recruitment and retention and the overall personality of a campus.

Additionally, orientation programming has "grown up" to the extent that professionals are now observing and responding to the special needs found in diverse groups. Each group of students is unique and has individual adjustment needs, and orientation directors are being asked to determine those needs and to individualize as much as possible. Some of the programmatic strategies which might be employed to target a specific population are separate programs, extended programs, schedule revisions, and break-away sessions. The orientation director is charged with knowing about the diverse groups and with determining the appropriate orientation protocol for each group, thereby aiding each new student in his or her transition into the institution.

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8

Orientation Activities for the Families of New Students

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When we view new students, we are seeing but the tip of the iceberg, both in terms of the complexities of their individual psyches *and* in terms of the interpersonal support systems they represent. Most of our students arrive on campus with numerous significant relationships in place—relationships with parents, partners, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. These relationships are as important to the academic success of our newest community members as their familiarity with the layout of the campus, the curriculum requirements, and the library hours. Long before and long after attachments are made to new classmates, friends, roommates, faculty, and staff, students rely on family/extended family members for feedback, reassurance, and guidance.

The focus of this chapter will be on the ways in which orientation professionals can work with the important people in students' lives. The populations which will be addressed most especially will be the parents (step-parents, guardians) of traditional-age students and the spouses/partners of our non-traditional-age, adult learners.

Rationale for Expanding our Audience

Why not just orient the student, since it is the student who is joining the college community? Most of our traditional-age students would probably ask the same question. Throughout their pre-collegiate educational experiences, their families may have been highly involved and were probably kept directly informed about their daughters'/sons' progress by school officials. The entry into the "collegiate experience" is seen by most 17- or 18-year-olds as a concurrent end to parental involvement in their academic (and personal) lives in all ways but financial. Parents, too, may expect to be kept at arm's length, both by their student and by the college administration.

There are a number of reasons why it makes educational sense for the college to provide clearly defined opportunities for parents to stay involved in their student's academic experience. The underlying aim in student development theory and practice is to provide an educational environment that acknowledges the multidimensional aspects of human development and strives to enhance the growth process. Students may tell us that they are coming to college to "get a degree so I can get a job." But as educators we know that they will be tackling much more than just their course requirements. In a similar way, students may indicate that they cannot wait to get to college in order to "be independent," but as Cohen (1985) notes, they are still very much a part of their family systems. Cohen suggests that "if we can view students as dual citizens of both the college community and the family-of-origin, we can begin to deal more comfortably with them and their parents" (p. 7).

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Parents and students are often unclear about what they want their relationship to be with each other at this point—and that uncertainty can characterize what they *say* they want in their relationship with the institution. It may happen that on a given day the students will tell us not to involve their parents at all, and the next day they themselves are calling home asking their parents to hold us accountable. Parents will call our offices demanding that we address problems that their students are having, but then insist that we not reveal that they have called us because their students would be upset to know that they have gotten involved. Developing programmatic interventions for parents, such as orientation activities, provides a mechanism for staff to educate parents about the separation process and the ways in which they can appropriately be a part of their student's new experience.

Research data accumulated in recent years make a compelling case for devising orientation programs for parents of our traditional-age students, and for the spouses/partners of our non-traditional-age students—programs that are predicated on keeping family members *attached* in a renegotiated relationship, not on teaching them how to "let go."

In reporting the results of a study on traditional-aged student perceptions of parental attachment, Kenny (1990) states that ". . . student affairs staff need to be aware that parents can be an important source of support for their college-age children" (p. 45). In another related study, she writes, "College student affairs staff members can be critically important in communicating revised views regarding the value of parental ties to students, parents, and other college staff. Students need reassurance that it is all right to value their parental relationships and to turn to parents as a source of support and that these are not unnatural signs of immaturity or dependence" (Kenny, 1987, p. 441). The theme in these and other studies (Henton, Lamke, Murphy, & Haynes, 1980; Lapsley, Rice, & FitzGerald, 1990; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992) is the important ongoing connection that needs to exist between adolescent and parent. A healthy

student-parent relationship is positively linked to overall college adjustment, including academic achievement and affective health; and these issues are all clearly demonstrated factors in student retention.

The significant sources of support and connection for our non-traditional-age students may include relationships with parents but are more likely to involve those with spouses or partners and may also include the students' children. Results of a study focused on wellness issues for this population showed that "for non-traditional-age students the most frequently chosen beneficial factor in their wellness was 'balancing my personal needs with the demands from others.'. . . The most frequently selected factor detrimental to wellness for the older student was 'feeling overwhelmed or conflicted about fulfilling all my role responsibilities'" (Hybertson, Hulme, Smith, & Holton, 1992, p. 52-53). The respondents in the study clearly identified environmental influences as key to their successful functioning and overwhelmingly endorsed items that related to support systems and interpersonal relationships including those with family members, friends and neighbors. The authors concluded that "most importantly, the results point to the necessity of helping commuter students, especially non-traditional-age commuters, develop responsive and reliable support systems" (Hybertson et al., 1992, p. 53). The implications for orientation professionals are clear.

Separation from the Family of Origin

Understanding the separation process is central to understanding what is going on for our traditional-age students as they move from late adolescence to early adulthood. Separation in this context refers not to physical distancing but rather to the creation of a sense of autonomy in the young adult and "a reciprocal lessening of the emotional and psychological ties between parents and children" (Lopez, 1986, p. 509). The separation process is a mutual one for the adolescent and the parent with both parties experiencing developmental changes. Separation that has successfully been achieved brings with it an ability on the part of the young adult to function independently while still maintaining an important emotional tie to his/her parents. For the parents, evidence of successful separation is their ability to develop an adult-to-adult relationship with their young adult and feel comfortable with the change in the role of "parent." Separation does *not* mean a lack of connection; in fact, where there is no interdependence between young adult and parent, healthy developmental separation has not happened.

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Bloom (1980) describes five stages in adolescent-parental separation. In the first stage, both the adolescent and the parent are caught between wanting to stay in the relationship as it has been (i. e., parent and child) and wanting to move on to the next stage (i. e., adult-to-adult.) No one

word better characterizes this stage (and, in many ways, the entire separation process) than "ambivalence." Adolescents and parents alike find themselves vacillating in their expressed and unexpressed feelings and actions.

The second stage is when the adolescent comes to terms cognitively with the idea of separation. During this stage he/she may argue with parents about almost everything in order to establish an unique sense of self. In the third stage, after the cognitive integration of separation has taken place, the affective processing is addressed. Both adolescent and parent deal with nostalgia for the past, with feelings of guilt and anger, and with the challenge of negotiating individuation without sacrificing a loving attachment.

During the fourth stage, adolescents adopt those qualities of their parents that have perceived value to them; it is at this point that the adolescent has come to understand that being "like" one's parent doesn't mean being an "extension" of one's parent. Similarly, during this stage parents learn how to translate the best parts of the parenting role into the next stage of their life, while enjoying the knowledge that they have been successful parents. The final stage is marked by the ability of the young adult to develop emotionally intimate relationships outside of the family and to make commitments. Both the parent and the young adult can enjoy their shared relationship, knowing that they are able to function separately while retaining a special connection.

Most student development professionals are well-versed in the developmental tasks facing our traditional-age students (e. g., wrestling with identity, exploring and navigating interpersonal relationships, developing a sense of purpose and direction). As orientation professionals, we may be less familiar with the developmental tasks facing the parents of our students but for anyone programming with this population, this knowledge is crucial.

Most student development professionals are well-versed in the developmental tasks facing our traditional-age students (e. g., wrestling with identity, exploring and navigating interpersonal relationships, developing a sense of purpose and direction). As orientation professionals, we may be less familiar with the developmental tasks facing the parents of our students but for anyone programming with this population, this knowledge is crucial. Many parent orientation programs over the years have been built on the foundation of educating parents about the changes inherent in the passage from late adolescence to early adulthood but have ignored the parents' own issues (except in terms of the adolescent). Knowing that the separation process is a mutual one, we do half the job if we view the process solely through the adolescent lens.

In an attempt to obtain more information about the separation transition from the parents' perspective, a study has been conducted at Bentley College for six years using the College Parent Questionnaire (Austin & Sousa, 1987). Based on adult development theory, the instrument requires respondents to endorse items using a four-point Likert scale as well as to provide demographic information on 14 variables. Two additional

variables ask parents to assess their students in terms of academic and social ability. A number of major findings have emerged including the following:

- no major differences in response patterns between parents of commuters and parents of residents;
- very little difference in response patterns between parents of daughters and parents of sons;
- little faith or confidence of parents in general in their students' abilities to succeed in college but a desire to retain control in, or over, their students' lives;
- a more protective attitude if parents perceive their students' academic or social abilities as average or below average;
- a greater sense of loss and desire for control in parents who have not been to college;
- a similarity in response patterns for first-time parents and parents who have not been to college.

Information of this type provides a basis for developing programs that meet the specific needs of parents while concurrently attending to the transitional needs of our students.

Understanding the need for workable boundaries is also essential to professionals. Lopez (1986) speaks of the importance of boundaries in the family system and indicates that "'clear' boundaries facilitate contact between the various subsystems while permitting distinct, generationally appropriate functioning" (p. 508). For our purposes, boundaries may be defined as observable behaviors and tangible mechanisms that provide for healthy connections without forestalling the process of individuation. When orientation staff members understand the importance of keeping family connected to their students *and* understand that there are better and worse ways for those connections to happen, they can play a critical role in teaching family members how to stay attached appropriately.

Determining Program Goals

Institutional program goals when working with parents/partners may be quite different from the goals that those populations bring to us. Family members choose to attend orientation programs designed for them for reasons both expressed and unexpressed. Perigo (1985) states that the concerns for quality and fit are central issues. Consistent with those issues, program participants will often tell us that they are in attendance because they want to show support for their students, are interested in learning what the college is all about, need to be (re)assured that their student's choice of the college is a good one, wish to stay actively involved in their student's life, and are looking for specific information regarding such issues as financial aid, housing, safety, and security.

Program participants are less likely to share with us that they are also attending our programs because they are concerned about how attendance at the college may change their student's life *and* their life, want to

try to determine what the college values, wish to retain some level of control in their student's life, and are hoping to hear that the institution cares about *them* as well as their student. The goals that participants tend to state are often more cognitively based; those they tend not to state are more often affectively based. As a result, orientation professionals have frequently devised programs that provide lots of factual information but never speak directly to the emotional component.

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The goals for orientation professionals when working with family members come from what we know of family dynamics. These goals are first, to assist in the establishment and maintenance of appropriate boundaries and to provide the means for the participant to continue to be a "good partner" or "good parent" while observing the necessary boundaries; and second, to address directly the myriad ambivalent feelings being experienced by everyone—students, parents, and partners—and which are undoubtedly coloring the relationships as the time comes closer for the academic year to begin. In the case of the adolescent-parental relationship, dealing with the emotional dimension can set the stage for helping the participants to gain insight into the separation process.

Family members want to know how to be the best husband, wife, father, mother, or partner to their students. Family members also know *much* more about their students than any of us at the college may ever know. It is critical that orientation staff acknowledge that the *family members* are the experts about their own students. However, we need to share with them our expertise about adolescent and adult development and about family dynamics in general and allow them to make applications in their own way.

In addressing the issue of appropriate boundaries, two types of interactions need to be kept in mind: those between the students and the family members, and those between the family members and the college. Family members need to be given examples of ways to be helpful and supportive without compromising boundaries. For example, they can serve as a referral agent to their students for the campus community if they are knowledgeable about the college; but in providing lots of tangible information to them, it should be made clear that the aim is not to have them do for their students what the students are capable of doing for themselves. Similarly, family members should know that while it is appropriate to contact the college when they are anxious about the well-being of their students, the institution will not collude with them to do things for the students without the students' knowledge.

Orientation programs can help family members explore strategies for enhancing the changing relationship with their students, but these programs also need to provide opportunities for the family members' feelings

to be acknowledged and affirmed. Kenny (1987) suggests that parents need to know that it is all right to respond to their sons'/daughters' request for involvement but that they "need to recognize, however, that lending their support may mean supporting the development of interests, ideas, and values different than their own . . ." (p. 441). Orientation staff should speak to the fact that the family members in attendance may also be redirecting their interests and that part of their task in the renegotiated relationship may be to help their students understand that they are not the only ones in the family who are changing. Orientation programs for family members have historically tried to make the participants aware of the demands that exist in the life of a college student, so that the family can adjust *its* level of expectation for the student. At the same time, family members need to be reassured that it is appropriate for them to continue to rely on their students (within reasonable parameters). Family members and students alike can be reminded that as a member of a family there are expectations and tasks that must be fulfilled and that membership in an academic community does not absolve anyone of all other relationship responsibilities.

Developing and Implementing a Program

Translating all of this into an orientation program is both a challenge and an opportunity. Hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the United States have chosen to devote resources to the orientation of family members. In the most recent edition of the *National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank, 1990-1991* (Strumpf, 1991), of the 388 member institutions surveyed, 82% indicated that they have some type of orientation for parents. (Note: The *Data Bank* instrument did not ask about orientation programs for spouses/partners.) The definition of "orientation activities" varies from one institution to another; for our purposes let us consider all contacts with family members from the point of a student's first inquiry with the college through the first year of enrollment.

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Earliest interactions. During the pre-acceptance and pre-deposit periods of contact, students and their families form their opinions about institutions and try to determine if what they see and what they hear mesh with their image of "the right college." Students and family members are looking for signs that bespeak a good fit. Regardless of the tangible concerns, the often unvoiced questions center on issues of psychic safety. For the student this means, "Will I be liked here?" "Will I find people like me here?" and "Will I succeed or fail here?" For the family the questions are, "Will these people value the uniqueness of my student?" "Will my student get the attention she/he deserves here?" and "Will my student survive here?" Given the emotional dimension attached to the decision to attend a college, it makes sense that the perceived approval and support of the family is valuable to the student.

In all the various contacts during this time period (mailings, on- and off-campus interviews, open house activities, on-campus tours, regional receptions held by staff, alumni, and families of current students), it should be remembered that *both* the students and their families are important. It should also be remembered that these earliest interactions set the tone for how families learn about their future relationship with the college. Staff need to be clear about boundary issues and to model behavior that reinforces appropriate boundaries. Family members should not be encouraged to answer questions for their students. Likewise, family members who accompany their students to a pre-acceptance program should be acknowledged directly and permitted to voice their questions.

Formal orientation programs. At the point where students indicate a clear commitment to attend the college, the institution's relationship with them takes on a new tone. The process of bringing the students into the college community as its newest members begins in earnest, and rare is the week in the few months prior to enrollment that a mailing from, a visit to, or a phone call from a college office or representative does not occur. When all of these interactions are coupled with participation in the college's formal student orientation program, it is quite likely that the transition process from the previous educational or work experience to the college environment has been made smoother. The relationship between the institution and the new students has become less unidimensional and has begun to have an emotional aspect. A sense of shared purpose and of affiliation has started to emerge. The new students begin to learn the language (both "academic-speak" and the specific college's own jargon) spoken by the college community members, and they pick up on the mores and nuances of the community.

So too, the college's relationship with the parents/partners changes in nature. In some instances, the change means that there are no further contacts from the college, and the signal received obliquely is that parents/partners are not important to the college. It is not all that unusual for family members to have no formal interactions with the college until the evening that a student telemarketer calls their home asking for a donation to the annual fund.

Extending an invitation to an orientation program designed expressly for them sends a clear message to the family members that they have not been forgotten. The program content and manner of delivery communicate volumes about the way the college regards the family members of its students and about the type of ongoing relationship that can be anticipated throughout the students' experience at the college.

In developing an family orientation program, the two major considerations are structure and content. Regarding structure, questions that need to be answered include the following:

- Will the program run in conjunction with the students' program? Will it be run as a separate entity, or will the two programs intersect at some points?

- Will the program be offered during the summer, just prior to the start of classes or after classes start?
- Will the program be run on weekdays, evenings, or weekends?
- How long will the program be— a half day, or one, two, or three full days?
- Will the program be facilitated by professional staff, student staff, faculty, family members of current students, or a combination thereof?
- Will a fee be charged of the participants, and if so, what will the fee be?
- How will the program be evaluated?

The answers to these questions need to reflect the culture, parameters, and demographics of the given college as well as complement the delivery model of the students' orientation programs.

The *NODA Data Bank* (Strumpf, 1991) indicates that of the institutions surveyed, over two thirds of the family orientation programs run partially in conjunction with and partially separate from the students' program. The modeling implicit in this format is solid: the family members will share in some of the students' college life but not all of it. This would also imply that the programs for family members are generally, but not exclusively, held at the same time as the students' programs. A college running a multi-session summer orientation program may provide the opportunity for parents to attend *any* of the sessions, not just the one in which their student participates. The same college may also provide the chance for parents who were unable to attend in the summer to join a catch-up program which might be offered on the day that students move to campus.

The content of an orientation program for family members should be designed to expand on the themes determined for the program. In addition to the overarching goals already outlined in this chapter, appropriate themes for a parents' program might include the following:

- the kinds of "predictable crises" that parents can anticipate as their students move through late adolescence in a college setting,
- the decreasing degree of control that parents can expect to exert over their students' lives,
- the bittersweet aspects of experiencing a lessening of the gratifying role of active parent,
- the ways in which parents can refocus their energies as their own lives undergo change.

Themes specific to a partners' program include:

- the rhythm of the academic year and times of particular stress,
- the possible need for redefining acceptable levels of participation in each other's lives,
- the need for renegotiating the role responsibilities in the partnership and the home.

Family program components that deal directly with college information are as follows:

- tours of the campus;
- sessions about academic programs, policies, and procedures;
- presentations about student life concerns (e.g., the residential/commuter experience, safety and security issues, community rules and regulations, opportunities for co- and extra-curricular involvement);
- meetings with significant campus representatives (e.g., faculty members, academic and student development administrators, the provost, the president.)

Program time focused on the more subtle, affective areas can take many forms. The welcoming address is a wonderful occasion to get to the emotional themes immediately and set a tone for the entire program. Skits, role plays, and videos have been developed by colleges that raise issues that might be encountered by the student during the academic experience.

At the University of Louisville, a "Phil Donahue" type format is used during the parents' program. A 45-minute session is presented that involves a professional staff member and four student staff members discussing typical scenarios before an audience of parents. Some colleges structure small groups and raise specific topics to which the group members respond. For the last 12 years, Bentley College has intersected the student and parent program for a session entitled "The Parent-Student Workshop." Co-facilitated by trained faculty/staff members and student orientation leaders, participants respond to a series of open-ended statements (e.g., "To me a college education means . . ." "The effect that my going to Bentley is likely to have on my family is . . ." "The thing I am most apprehensive about in thinking of my son/daughter as a college student is . . .").

The student population at Indiana University/Purdue University at Indianapolis is primarily comprised of adult learners who commute to the campus. The orientation program "for parents and significant others" is called "Family Connections" and is offered three weeks into the semester on a weekend. The program covers a variety of topics, but the most well-received session is a panel of current students speaking on issues such as changes that will happen in the home, time-management concerns, the new commitment to be dealt with, and the "balancing act" and how it affects the family. Family members who attend the orientation program receive a follow-up postcard later in the semester that asks them how things are going and if they have any concerns with which the staff might be able to assist.

Written materials. As a component of many family orientation programs, and sometimes as a part of an ongoing orientation effort, institutions frequently publish handbooks and newsletters. Any printed materials written especially for family members serve as structured devices through

which the institution is able to communicate directly with the families and educate them at the same time.

Handbooks designed for family members should provide a synthesized version of the students' handbook, capturing the central philosophic and conceptual foundations for the college's functioning. Key items for inclusion in a family handbook are a calendar for the academic year, names and phone numbers of staff to whom family members can turn, a final exam schedule, and a glossary of academic terms and college-specific jargon. A newsletter for family members can carry similar information and also provides an mechanism for distributing articles that are developmental in nature. The articles can be timed to correspond to seasonal events (e.g., the reintegration of the resident student into the family when he/she comes home for a holiday), and to more intangible "events" (e.g., mid-semester slump, spending one's first birthday away from home). Articles which feature the accomplishments of students can emphasize successful individuation by presenting evidence of students who have changed from dependent, immature adolescents to more autonomous, mature adults.

The Rochester Institute of Technology has been publishing a "Parents Guide" for six years which presents pertinent information to parents in a calendar format. Contained in the publication are messages from key staff and administrators, descriptions of various student services, a question-and-answer section with questions most frequently posed by parents, a listing of area hotels, and names and addresses of "resource parents" who are members of the Institute's Parents Council.

The University of South Carolina, Columbia, distributes a Parents' Handbook at parents' orientation, during the check-in process at the residence halls, and on parents' weekend. The parents' newsletter, "Carolina Ties," is mailed out three times yearly and covers various topics of interest to parents.

Ongoing orientation activities. In much the same way that institutions provide programmatic support for their students *throughout* their first year, family programs can be planned that occur beyond the opening of the academic year. At the center of many first-year experiences is a freshman course. Bemidji State University has gone one step further and has developed "The Freshman Year Experience at Bemidji State University: A Home-Study Package for Parents." Sent to parents shortly before they receive an invitation to the orientation program, the package is designed to be completed with the student prior to attendance at orientation. It comprises 20 "study/work units" and covers a wide range of issues including information on various student services, academic advising, institutional policies, and developmental concerns. The authors of the units include student development staff and faculty members.

The traditional parents' day or weekend is a mainstay on many campuses with a schedule that features welcoming receptions, home athletic activities, and campus tours. It is becoming more common for colleges to stage

We who are in the business of working with students must not lose sight of the influence of the family system. Although our primary relationships will always be with our students, we diminish our potential to enhance their development if we discount the relationships that can be initiated with their families.

events that are planned to go beyond that agenda. Often renamed as "Family Day" or "Family Weekend", these programs are aimed at *all* the significant populations in the students' lives.

Complementing the activities usually built into these events, colleges are offering sessions with developmental themes that continue to respond to the task of separation for the adolescents and their parents, to the task of role renegotiation for the non-traditional students and their partners, and to the changes happening in the lives of all involved. Examples of topics for parents that could be addressed might include the following:

- career change issues (presented by career development staff),
- creative use of leisure time (presented by student activities staff),
- dealing with aging parents (presented by social work faculty or counseling staff),
- preparing for the financial changes that accompany retirement (presented by business faculty).

Summary

We who are in the business of working with students must not lose sight of the influence of the family system. Although our primary relationships will always be with our students, we diminish our potential to enhance their development if we discount the relationships that can be initiated with their families. Students and family members alike should be assured that remaining integral parts in each other's lives is appropriate. Assisting students in the establishment and maintenance of reasonable boundaries with their families is a task that we should approach purposefully and with consistency across the institution.

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9

Meeting The Demands of Many: Orientation at Two-Year Institutions

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Partly because of the increasing demand for education at two-year institutions we are seeing dramatic changes in student populations. Long past are the days when orientation programs could be designed to meet the needs of one specific population. Two-year institutions must accommodate students who are physically challenged, people of color or from different cultures, students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, under-prepared students, those fresh out of high school, parttime students, older returning adult students, and others. As a general rule the type of student who enrolls at a two-year college has many needs different from the student attending a four-year institution.

At some two-year institutions orientation has been in existence for quite some time; at others it is a rather new practice. In looking at the orientation process that takes place on two-year campuses the authors found there has been little research conducted to validate the importance of strong orientation programming. For this chapter the authors completed their own telephone survey of a number of community colleges which were identified as having a solidly established orientation program or ones that were unique.

As the demographics of our student populations change, the demand for orientation will increase. We must be responsive and willing to make adjustments. This chapter will begin by looking at the historical evolution of orientation at the two-year college and the contrasts between two-year and four-year institutions. We will then identify techniques used in developing orientation programs at two-year colleges. Key components of orientation will be reviewed as will the importance of flexibility in programming. In addition we will provide the reader with some models of orientation programs that have been successful or are unique to two-year institutions. To conclude we will consult with our reliable fortune teller and attempt to predict where we go from here.

Historical Overview

Historically, orientation evolved as institutions recognized a demand to meet the needs of new students and assist them in the transition from high school to college. Two-year institutions have been rather sluggish getting "on the bandwagon" and recognizing the importance of structured orientation programs. As the focus of two-year institutions has changed within the last few decades and enrollments have increased, many began to acknowledge the need for orientation programs. In writing this chapter, the authors found that most formal orientation programs at the two-year level have come into existence within the last ten years.

Two-year colleges appear to be in a process of constant change. During the last decade we have seen community colleges evolve from being mostly technically/vocationally oriented to offering more broad-based curricula. Many four-year institutions have implemented more strict and stringent admissions policies, accepting only the most academically prepared. As a result two-year institutions have been forced to accommodate students not accepted at four-year institutions and have experienced incredible growth. In addition, the need for higher education has increased, and the population of students has changed. All are issues that have led to greater demands on two-year institutions and increased demand for formal orientation programs for new students.

Development of Programs

Philosophically, orientation programs at two-year and four-year institutions differ very little. Most are designed to provide information about programs and resources that assist in the transition process. Two-year colleges have unique characteristics and populations, however, which should dictate the format of programs they offer. According to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), now known as American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), nearly all two-year colleges are commuter institutions with no residence halls. Approximately 77.6% of the students are employed either fulltime or parttime which could mean a loss of wages to students who attend orientation. Students attending two-year institutions tend to be older (average age being 28.7 years), have families to care for, are married (30%), take approximately eight credits per semester, are parttime students (69.7%), and are very goal oriented. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of fulltime students at two-year colleges are 18-22 years old (Parnell, 1990).

As long as the economic benefit for going to college remains high, there will be demand for collegiate studies. Community colleges will undoubtedly continue to serve a growing share of students for the same reasons that they always have: open access, low cost, geographic proximity, and the flexibility of attending parttime. Dale Parnell, author of *The Neglected Majority* and past President of the AACJC, defines two-year institutions as an "opportunity with excellence" (Parnell, 1991).

Because community colleges allow opportunities for disadvantaged, physically challenged, and learning disabled students to gain an education along with all others, there is perpetual change. This change creates many challenges for orientation professionals at two-year institutions.

The first step in developing an orientation program on campus is to establish a mission statement that declares the purpose of orientation at the institution. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) suggests that "the mission of student orientation must be to provide for continuing services and assistance that will aid new students in their transition to the institution, expose new students to the broad educational opportunities of the institution, and integrate new students into the life of the institution" (Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs, 1988, p.21).

One might begin by building a program for one specific population of students and then expanding and adding programs each year. The goals should include identification of the populations to be reached, methods used to reach them, and ways in which the program will attempt to connect the student to the institution. "Overall, we must look at new ways of achieving traditional goals and additional ways of meeting new goals. We must be cognizant of changes in the milieu of higher education and in our student populations and keep abreast of political factors that affect orientation. If we do not do all these things, we will not be able to sustain the positive growing impact of orientation on retention in recent decades" (Titley, 1985, p. 223). Populations are in a process of continual change, and the goals of orientation programs should be flexible enough to adapt to these changes.

In developing programs for diverse populations, many factors need to be taken into consideration. Orientation programs and activities at two-year colleges are generally limited to one day or less, and are designed to meet the needs of specific populations. Orientation for incoming "traditional" freshman students should be much different than orientation for adult returning students. The key to successful orientation programs at two-year institutions is flexibility. To meet the needs of different student populations and accommodate time schedules, orientation programs can be held during evenings and weekends, or at off-campus locations, or for specific target populations (i.e., adult students, students with disabilities, ethnic minority students, and others).

Another important consideration in program development is financing of the program. Costs associated with orientation (food services, publications, entertainment, staffing, etc.) are continually on the rise. Some two-year colleges charge students to attend orientation, while others do not. In the state of California, for example, the state has a mandatory matriculation fee which is used for orientation programming. At other colleges the funding source may be student fees or money from the student development office. Some colleges are also turning to corporate sponsorships in order to meet these challenges. Funding issues

should be confronted early on to avoid frustration and potential problems. (See Chapter 6 for funding suggestions.)

Responsibility for orientation varies with each institution. In our survey of two-year institutions we found that there were very few two-year colleges that had an office exclusively for orientation. Responsibility for orientation is often assigned to a new staff member or one with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. Since orientation is an ongoing process beginning at the time the first contact is made, many people take part in the process. Admissions personnel may be the first contact with the college. In a recent survey compiled for the *National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank* it was found that the office most often responsible for orientation was the campus Advisement/Counseling Center (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993).

The last issue one might address is who benefits from orientation? Titley (1985) identifies five groups; students, parents, faculty, student affairs, and the institution. The students can gain new wisdom about themselves, and their anxiety can be reduced by establishing contact with peers, faculty, and staff. Parents/families can gain a clearer understanding of the role of the institution and of their role in helping their student achieve educational success. Faculty can benefit by having students that are better prepared to make the academic adjustment and are knowledgeable about programs, policies, and procedures. Student affairs staff can spend more time with individual students and can concentrate their efforts on issues that will help retention. The institution as a whole can benefit greatly by providing the students with tools they can use to enhance their success, and by accommodating the needs of many in a large group in a timely and economical process.

In his book, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, Ernest Boyer (1987) says, "There is no simple response to the challenge of orienting new students to the campus. Some are less secure and need to feel part of a group; others prefer to make it on their own. Still, we are convinced that colleges should be as committed and creative in helping students adjust to college life as they are in getting them to campus in the first place. Such a view does not deny the maturity or independence of students; it simply recognizes that each university or college has a culture of its own and that understanding that culture contributes immensely to the quality of learning—and to retention, too" (Boyer, 1987, p. 46). In developing programs it is important that we keep these things in mind and adjust as necessary.

Key Components of Orientation

Like the populations they serve, each two-year institution has its own unique program for orienting students and connecting them to the campus; yet each program should contain some common components. According to a paper presented at the Wyoming Higher Education Student Affairs Conference, effective precollege orientation programs provide students with: (a) descriptions of college program offerings; (b)

the college's expectations for students; (c) information about assistance and services for examining interests, values, and abilities; (d) encouragement to establish working relationships with faculty; (e) information about services that help with adjustment to college; and (f) financial aid information (Coll & VonSeggern, 1991). Generally, two-year college orientation programs include assessment, advising, and registration. Aims Community College in Greeley Colorado calls this process "one-stop shopping."

Pre-Enrollment Assessment. The process of assessment is often viewed very negatively from the students' point of view because it is normally required and includes recommended placement into courses. Pre-enrollment assessment is required at 71% of the public community colleges in the United States. Students expect to take some type of "entrance exam" at four-year institutions, but two-year institutions almost apologize for inconveniencing students. Fortunately, that is changing as the importance of pre-enrollment assessment is more widely accepted. Most two-year institutions are "open door" and thus offer a college experience to anyone.

Pre-enrollment assessment takes on added importance for students who have been away from an educational setting for many years, those who may never have thought seriously about college before, and those who have an unrealistic picture of what is expected in college. In a study conducted at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) researchers found that 70% of students completing their placement test required some form of remediation. As part of BMCC's efforts to improve first-year retention rates, students requiring remediation have the option of enrolling in a free, six-week intensive remedial summer session. In addition, all first-year students enroll in a year-long freshman orientation course taught by a member of the counseling staff (Curtis & Harte, 1991).

Faculty and program administrators can be effective when used to advise within their academic disciplines, but have mixed results when they discuss course requirements or transfer information outside of their field. Success in faculty advising lies in selection and training of those faculty members.

Advising. Because of the wide diversity of academic backgrounds and personal priorities, advising each student is a new experience. The majority of advising at two-year institutions is done by academic counselors or advisors; however, many institutions also use student peer assistants. At some institutions, students must meet with an advisor before they are allowed to register. For example, American River Community College (CA) and Marshalltown Community College (IA) provide a mandatory orientation in which all students must meet individually with their assigned advisor.

At other institutions, advising may be done by faculty or administrators. Faculty and program administrators can be effective when used to advise within their academic disciplines, but have mixed results when they discuss course requirements or transfer information outside of their field. Success in faculty advising lies in selection and training of those faculty

members. It is critical to select faculty members who are committed and can relate to students. Advisors must not only be knowledgeable about their institution's program, but also about institutions to which their advisees may transfer. For example, at Salt Lake Community College, one advisor primarily counsels students wanting to transfer to a four-year institution.

Clearly, the most underutilized group of potential advisors are student peer advisors. When properly recruited, selected, trained, and supervised, peer advisors can produce excellent results. At some campuses, students are used in peripheral activities such as campus tours. However, they can and should be used in more central activities and can be the best asset at orientation programs. Peer assistants free the professional advising staff to attend to more complicated and serious problems.

The greatest potential for development in two-year-college orientation programs is the expanded use of peer advisors. All of the institutions surveyed indicated that they use peer leaders in one way or another. At Muskegon Community College, peer assistants run the entire orientation program. At others they are involved in campus tours, icebreaker activities, and a variety of workshops. Careful selection and intensive training of peers have provided outstanding results since 1975 at Lansing Community College (MI). All new and transfer students are advised by peer advisors with the active support of professional counselors. Twenty-five student advisors are hired each year; approximately half the team is replaced each June. Once recruited and selected, the entire team then attends a three-day mandatory training, usually at an off-campus site. Training at these sessions focuses on team building rather than academic information, which is covered later in training on the campus. These advisors work with all new students. Throughout the year the peer advisors provide information and academic advice in two advising centers on campus. In addition, these advisors staff a 24-hour academic advising phone line, attend college nights with admissions personnel, attend monthly training workshops, and attend quarterly team building retreats.

Registration. Over the past two decades, registration has become a common and integral part of orientation. In some instances it is the incentive that gets the student to attend the orientation program. With the advent of computers and technology, registration has become a very user-friendly process. Common practice allows for telephone registration, mail registration, or registration at off-campus sites. As colleges continue to make registration easier for students, the challenge is to provide adequate advising to keep up with rapidly developing technology. To overcome this problem, both Amarillo College (TX) and Palo Alto College (TX) require students to meet with counselors prior to registering. Tyler Junior College (TX) requires a visit with a counselor the first semester to develop a degree plan. Students only have to return to their counselors if they change their majors.

In addition to assessment, advising, and registration, many other activities can be an integral part of the orientation program. Special interest sessions and campus tours can be included as part of the program. These sessions may include topics such as study techniques, financial aid, career planning, transfer information, and campus issues such as date rape or substance abuse. Because of time constraints, many two-year colleges ignore some of these very important campus issues. It is also critical that the orientation program include information about services provided by the institution. Orientation should be seen as a resource for the student.

Orientation is an ongoing process. It begins with the first contact the student has with the institution and continues throughout the entire educational experience. A paper titled "Blazing New Trails in the '80s" sums it up best with the following observation: The four major rules of recruitment for retention may be summarized as recruit ethically, orient honestly, inform continuously, and advise developmentally (Tang, 1981).

Adapting and Flexibility: The Heart of the Issue

"The community college has found its niche in postcompulsory education in the United States. Other nations sometimes provide the same services through a combination of institutions, but more often they do not use the formal school system to coordinate the various services provided in the American community colleges. The American experiment of offering access to higher education, job entry, job up-grading, literacy development, and continuing education all within the same institution has not been duplicated elsewhere" (Cohen, 1993, p. 182). Succinctly stated the community college is "all things to all people."

Given the nature of community colleges and the diversity of their populations, they must be flexible and adaptable to change. One never knows what will come up that will force new changes. For example, Miami Dade Community College had to adjust its programming to meet the needs of students impacted by a recent hurricane.

Adult students, underprepared students, students with disabilities, transfer students, international students, concurrent enrollees, and minority students are just a few of the special populations which have unique needs and demands. The authors found that although most institutions have orientation programs designed for these populations, they are typically conducted by the office that is responsible for overseeing that population's programs.

The philosophy at Johnson County Community College is that orientation must be delivered in a multi-faceted manner. Therefore, the college offers orientation programs for student athletes, international students, returning adults, and traditional freshmen. At Bellevue Community College all new students are encouraged to attend orientation at some point during a three week period on a walk-in basis. Muskegon Community College developed an award winning program for minority

students that included representatives from the Urban League to discuss cultural issues. At the Community College of Philadelphia, a Minority Education Initiative Program was created to increase the enrollment of black and Hispanic students through proactive recruitment and retention. The program includes three components; a minority mentoring program, recruitment, and assessment of orientation needs (Pulliams, 1988). At South Mountain Community College, in Phoenix, Arizona, a multifaceted transfer and retention program has been developed, beginning at the start of the student's college career through transfer to a four-year college or university. The program includes a college orientation, a mentor program, and a university orientation (Roberts & Warren, 1984). Laramie County Community College offers sessions for both traditional-age students and non-traditional. Many students have unique circumstances and demands placed upon them, and this has definitely had an impact on orientation programming, more noticeably at two-year rather than at four-year institutions.

Orientation at two-year institutions is generally a much different process than at a four-year institution.

Responsiveness and flexibility are the keys to designing and providing programs for the many different populations that two-year institutions serve. Accessibility for students does not necessarily guarantee success. It was once thought that if students had access to education, they could then become successful. Unfortunately this is not the case for most students today. Each individual has distinct needs and circumstances to be met. The priorities of a returning adult learner will be much different from those of a traditional-age college freshman; the needs of a disabled student will be much different from those of a student athlete.

If two-year institutions are to maintain the philosophy of being all things to all people, then they also need to be responsive to these different populations and provide programs that provide the skills and support necessary to succeed. The orientation office can provide this foundation of support and should work closely with other offices on campus to initiate programs specific to these populations.

Models of Success

Orientation at two-year institutions is generally a much different process than at a four-year institution. As we have already discussed, programs must be concise, meaningful, and meet the needs of the population served. The authors have identified a number of two-year institutions with programs which could serve as models of effectiveness.

The philosophy at Johnson County Community College located in Overland Park, Kansas, is that orientation should be delivered in a multi-faceted approach. Students who have never been to college are required to attend a session with a Student Development Assistant (paraprofessional) in which individuals receive a one-on-one personalized orientation. During the summer a daily program for eight weeks allows students to apply for admission, take the assessment test, go on a campus

tour, and register, all in the same day. In addition to both of these programs, programs are also designed specifically for international students, student athletes, and adult students. Being flexible and responsive is the key to the success of orientation at Johnson County Community College.

Miami Dade Community College offers full-day, half-day, and evening programs to meet the changing demands of their students. Orientations are conducted throughout the spring and summer. New students fresh out of high school may complete advance registration where they are allowed to test and then register for fall classes. These sessions are normally held in April of the student's senior year. The advantage for these students is that they are allowed to register prior to returning students and do not have to pay tuition until August. Miami Dade also has programs for international students, those receiving scholarships, students with disabilities, and an informal program for reentry students. Additionally, all new students are required to register for a one-credit hour freshman seminar course.

The programs at Salt Lake Community College, located in Salt Lake City, Utah, are broad in nature to accommodate the needs of many populations. Incoming traditional-age freshmen attend an extensive one-day "Welcome" program that includes information sessions, advising, and registration. The key to the success of this program has been making it fun, worthwhile, and allowing registration. Adult students attend a "Fall Festival," similar to an old-fashioned county fair, where they are provided with orientation to programs and services. They can also register at this time. In addition, Salt Lake Community College provides separate programs for single parents, students with disabilities, international students, and parents of students. Students who do not attend one of the above programs are encouraged to attend a "First Step" orientation which is a one-and-a-half to two-hour workshop providing information about resources, program requirements, and course scheduling. If students wish to complete early registration, they are required to attend some type of orientation.

Orientation at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, includes three different segments. The first segment includes pre-enrollment assessment, information about policies and procedures, and issues of cultural and sexual diversity. The success tour is the second step and is a small group orientation led by a peer counselor who teaches the "in's and out's" of registration. During this segment, students who are identified as "at risk" are provided a success contract which matches them with a mentor and enrolls them in Survival 101 (freshman success course). The third phase is called "The Freshman Experience" and occurs the Sunday prior to school starting. This program is the culmination of orientation and is a highly active, energizing program that often includes "Playfair" activities, a motivational speaker, and information about student clubs and organizations. Harper also provides a one-credit hour freshman seminar course that runs for eight weeks and carries general

education elective credit. Through these programs, students are made to feel that they are a part of the community and that college is a process where students can receive individualized attention.

At the Community College of Allegheny County, students complete testing and registration first and then come back later for individualized advising. Butte College in Oroville, California, requires all new students to attend an orientation session. Those who do not, must attend a mini-orientation session after school has begun. Muskegon Community College's program begins in the high school where the students take the assessment test and are then provided a half hour abbreviated orientation. Once this process is complete, they are invited to campus where they will meet with counselors and complete their class scheduling. Columbus State Community College offers a condensed program where students are tested, provided an overview of the college, and then assisted with class registration.

This is just a sample of the model programs that the authors have identified as quality orientation programs. The list is by no means comprehensive but should provide the reader with some idea of programs that have been recognized as being successful. There are many orientation programs in existence, and all are unique in their own ways. Some two-year institutions have adapted programs from four-year institutions and vice versa. The overriding consideration in developing programs is to do what works for your institution and make continual modifications and improvements.

Future Fads: Chats with a Fortune-teller

Looking down the road we ask ourselves: Where is orientation in two-year institutions headed? Will these types of programs survive? What new and unique ideas will come about? What effect has orientation had at the two-year college? Enrollment in two-year colleges has continued to grow for the last four decades and, therefore, there has been little pressure to look seriously at retention programs. During the last five years, retention has begun to be more important as federal and state funds are tied more closely to retention and graduation. In the late seventies, the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) Conference theme was "We get them first, let's keep them." Orientation is now recognized as an important step in student success. The enrolled student has made a commitment to the college, and a good orientation program should focus on ways to help students stay and reach their educational goals.

In analyzing the trends at two-year institutions, the authors utilized the services of the *National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank* (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993). In analyzing the trends six areas were studied: faculty involvement in orientation, freshman attendance in the program, number of sessions geared towards special populations, time devoted to academic matters, time devoted to social matters, and retention studies on attendees/non-attendees. Of those institutions completing surveys, 31 institutions had experienced an increase in faculty involvement, 2

indicated a decrease, and 25 remained the same. Attendance at orientation had increased significantly at 34 institutions, decreased at 2, and remained the same at 22. The number of sessions designed for specific populations remained the same at 37 two-year colleges, increased at 20, and decreased at 1. The amount of time devoted to academic matters increased at 21 institutions, decreased at 2, and remained the same at 35. Time devoted to social issues retained the same at 35, decreased at 4, and increased at 19. The last area examined the issue of retention studies. The importance of retention-based studies increased at 18 institutions, remained the same at 37, and decreased at 2.

What does all this mean? The authors feel that this clearly illustrates the point being made throughout the chapter: orientation at two-year colleges is unique to each institution, and it is necessary to modify and adapt your orientation program to meet new demands. The results from the *National Orientation Directors Association Data Bank* (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993) clearly indicate that there have been increases in each area studied. More faculty are getting involved in orientation programs, more students are attending, sessions are being added for special populations, more time is being spent on both academic and social matters, and two-year institutions are placing more emphasis on the importance of retention issues. Are these merely passing trends? To the contrary, we believe they are vital functions which are permanently changing the face of orientation.

Looking to the future the authors identified a variety of roadblocks and challenges that two-year colleges will be forced to deal with. Dollars for programs will undoubtedly be one of the most significant obstacles. Many states are experiencing budget shortfalls, and when this happens programs must be cut. Student service functions are often one of the first areas to face reductions. Along with the need for dollars is the need for staff. As institutions grow and responsibilities for providing orientation increase the need for additional staff also increases. If institutions have not yet considered using paraprofessionals, now is the time. In addition to funding and staffing issues, another challenge will be providing a multitude of programs to meet the needs of different populations. As the demographics of our populations change, orientation must change also. For orientation to persist at two-year institutions, those responsible for overseeing the programs must be cognizant of these changes as they come about and stand ready to adapt, modify, or expand programs to meet the many different populations the institution serves.

What will emerge from it all? Our trusty fortune teller tells us that extended orientation for all individuals is something that may be in the cards. The orientation horoscope says that we will see a new emergence of volunteers and peer professionals involved in orientation functions. Out of the hat will come new ideas for creative funding and corporate sponsorship. The magic wand will wave, and incoming new students will finally begin to realize the importance and value of orientation. Lastly, much like a palm reader, institutions will begin to look at the many paths and populations being served and will change their focus to individualize

programs to meet these needs. Orientation at two-year colleges is much like a treasure chest. There are many hidden jewels, some have been found and polished, others are still waiting to shine. Two-year colleges will most likely continue to experience enrollment increases and demographic changes. The "magic" of it all lies in the extent and success of orientation. The survival of each institution is dependent upon students, and students are dependent on the institution's programs and services. In order to face the challenges that lie ahead, it is imperative that two-year colleges develop strong orientation programs, be flexible, and adapt easily to change.

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10

Orienting Transfer Students

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Given the large numbers of college and university students who transfer and the unique needs of transfers, it is important to devote a chapter to transfer students. This topic is approached by discussing the types of transfer students, who transfers, characteristics of transfers, what happens to those who transfer, initiatives that aid transfer, and orientation programs that contribute to smooth transfer.

Types of Transfer Students

For most, the words *transfer student* connote the person who first enrolls in a community or junior college because ". . . all students entering community colleges must transfer to four-year colleges or universities before they can obtain baccalaureate degrees" (An Assessment of Urban Community Colleges Transfer Opportunities Program [UCCTOP], 1988, p. 17). However, transfers come in more packages — the reverse, lateral or horizontal, and multiple college transfer. Reverse transfers are students who transfer to two-year institutions from baccalaureate colleges and universities. Lateral or horizontal transfers are those who move from one two- or four-year institution to another like institution. Multiple transfers exhibit many patterns including 4 year to 2 year to 4 year (4 > 2 > 4) or 2 > 2 > 4 or 4 > 4 > 4 institutions.

Who Transfers

Much discussion of who transfers centers on the movement of students who first enroll in community colleges. Carter (1989), Heaney (1991), Lee and Frank (1990) agree that roughly 40% of college-going high school students, or about 4.9 million students, enroll in community colleges. Community colleges also enroll a significant percentage of minority students (Carter cites 47%, Heaney indicates 50.4%), and the majority of older college students (Carter, 1989). Heaney (1991) presents data

showing that "53.7% of all American Indian undergraduates are enrolled at a community college as are 41.8% blacks, 56.4% Latino, 40% Asian Americans, and 36% whites" (p. 4).

Using data from the *High School and Beyond* study of American high school students, Carter (1989) reports that "29% of the 1980 high school seniors who entered two-year colleges transferred to four-year institutions within three years. Transfer rates for blacks and Hispanics were lower: 18% and 23% respectively. The transfer rate for Asians was 41% and for American Indians, 30%" (p. 66). The report, *An Assessment of Urban Community College Transfer Opportunity Program* (1988), indicates that several studies support a transfer rate of about one third of community college students to four-year institutions.

Data from the *National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972* are cited by Kearney and Townsend (1991) to indicate transfer rates of freshmen entering four-year institutions. Forty-four percent of freshmen left within two years of matriculation with 42% of these departures transferring to another higher education institution and 14% stopping out before transferring or reentering.

Determining transfer rates is a matter about which much has been said and written. Does one determine transfer rates by comparing the number of college students who have taken courses elsewhere with all enrolled college and university students or by comparing the number of students enrolled in college with those who left community colleges and intended to transfer? Garcia (1992), Cohen (1991), Heaney (1991), and Williams (1990) report on the incompatibility of many forms of two-year to four-year transfer rate reporting.

Garcia (1992), reporting on the California Task Force, defines transfers as first-time freshmen at community colleges who earn at least six transferable units in their first full term. In 1989 the Ford Foundation contracted with the Center for the Study of Community Colleges to develop a definition of two- to four-year college transfer. According to Cohen (1991), the definition focuses on "the number of students entering in the fall of a given year with no prior college experience; the number of those entrants who obtained at least 12 college credit units within four years; (and) the number of the 12 unit attainers who had matriculated at a university by the latter year" (p. 6). Heaney (1991) reported on a study that indicated "only 21.4% of all students who earn 12+ credits at a community college eventually transfer to a four-year institution" (p. 11).

Cohen (1991), reporting on a two-year study of community college transfer, indicates that "around half the entrants with no prior college experience completed at least 12 semester units (four courses) at the college and, of those, around one-fourth transferred" (p. 9). He further notes that "the difference in transfer rates between ethnic minorities appears great: 19.6% for black students; 18.2% for Hispanics; 27% for whites. But these differences are much greater for the samples as a whole than they are within individual institutions" (p. 10). He goes on to present transfer

rates for different institutions that show transfer rates of less than 5% for black, Hispanic, and white students at one California community college and rates in the 48-57% range for black, Hispanic, and white students at a New Mexico community college.

Characteristics of Transfers

Given the heterogeneity of transfer students, the characteristics of community college to four-year college, four-year to four-year, reverse, lateral and multiple transfers will be reported. Lee and Frank (1990) describe community college to four-year college transfers as having higher social class, less likely to be minority, and less likely to be female. Further, they are more academically oriented in high school by enrolling in the academic track, submitting higher test grades and grades, and possessing higher educational aspirations. As community college students, transfers "earned almost twice as many credits during their first two years of college as those who did not, . . . reported spending more than twice as many semesters in full-time status, (and). . . did better in their courses. They also took more mathematics and science courses, which are more academic in nature" (Lee & Frank, 1990, p. 186).

Trends in Transfer in California Community Colleges (1991) discusses institutional transfer rates and notes that "transfer rates are higher from community colleges that enroll more full-time students, relatively more young full-time students and fewer full-time underrepresented students, are located in suburban areas, and operate transfer centers" (p. 5).

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Twede (1990) looked at baccalaureate transfers, students who left four-year colleges and universities for two-year or other four-year institutions. She indicates that women transfer more often than men and cited two obvious patterns: "consistent student movement to two-year colleges, except from private institutions with high selectivity, and the one-way movement of students to public universities and four-year colleges" (Twede, 1990, p. 12). She also reports that students starting college out-of-state tended to transfer to home-state institutions.

Twede (1990) identifies four factors that influence second institutional choice of baccalaureate students. First is the nature of the initial institution. "Students from public institutions tend to transfer more often to other public baccalaureate institutions and two-year colleges. Students from private universities are more likely to transfer to public universities" (p. 18). Data suggests "that students who transferred to other baccalaureate institutions transferred from colleges that did not have professional degree programs" (p. 14). Academic performance is the second factor influencing second institution choice. "Those who receive high grades in college transfer to other baccalaureate institutions or continue in the private sector. Students who received lower grades tend to transfer to two-year colleges or, if they initially attended private institutions, transfer to public universities or colleges" (p. 19).

Twede's (1990) third and fourth factors influencing second institution choice are finances and academic "floundering" respectively. "Students who transferred to a two-year college were more concerned about finances and received less support from grants. Students who transferred from private to public institutions were more likely to chose the institution based on the financial aid package offered by the institution" (p. 19) and their inability to afford their initial institution's costs.

> "Reverse transfers reported lower academic performance, yet were more satisfied with the campus social life than their counterparts who transferred to other baccalaureate institutions. . . (T)his characterization could be interpreted as a lack of academic integration for these students. . . (S)tudents who transfer from private to public institutions are still 'floundering' about their academic goals and may be unable to reconcile the higher tuition costs of private education" (pp. 18-19).

They are reported to be more uncertain of major after two years in college and receiving lower college grades.

Kearney and Townsend (1991) looked at characteristics of multiple transfers or the gypsy student in higher education. At one university, multiple transfers comprised 21% of entering undergraduates and 46% of new transfers in Fall 1989. Kearney and Townsend (1991) describe multiple transfers as having high socioeconomic backgrounds and high goal commitment but low institutional commitment. Transfers following the 4 > 2 > 4 path "were younger than students in the other three groups and were more likely to be single, to have attended college preparatory high school programs, to have college-educated fathers, and to persist at the subject university" (p. 16). They were more frequently white and enrolled full-time.

Mitchell (1984) found reverse and lateral transfers "to be older, married, more employed, enrolled for multiple reasons, many of them occupationally-related. Their reasons for leaving and attending are often related to changes in their personal or work lives rather than to academic concerns" (p. 4).

"Transfers taking the 2 > 4 > 4 path were less likely than students in the other three groups to have earned a postsecondary degree prior to enrolling at the subject university" and less likely to persist than other groups (Kearney & Townsend, 1991, p. 16). The 2 > 2 > 4 transfers "earned lower high school grades; were less likely to have attended college preparatory high schools; and were older, more likely to be married and to have earned a previous degree" (p. 17). Further, they came from lower socioeconomic status families, were the least geographically mobile, and were more often male, Asian, Hispanic, and international students. "Transfers following the 4 > 4 > 4 path came from families with higher income levels and achieved higher high school grades and class ranks than students in the other three groups. . . and were the most geographically mobile of the four groups" (p. 17).

In a study of students in the Los Rios Community College District in California, Mitchell (1984) found reverse and lateral transfers "to be older, married, more employed, enrolled for multiple reasons, many of them occupationally-related. Their reasons for leaving and attending are often

related to changes in their personal or work lives rather than to academic concerns " (p. 4). The community college attracted reverse and lateral transfers for reasons similar to those attracting first-time community college entrants— "low cost, lack of admissions requirements, college/ faculty reputation, and convenient location" (Mitchell, 1984, p. 10).

What Happens to Those Who Transfer

Not only are transfer students important because of their sheer numbers in higher education, they are also important because of what happens to them after transfer. Carter (1989), citing a 1989 Washington State study, reported "that baccalaureate recipients who transferred from community colleges have the same distribution of degree majors, final year grades, and plans for the future as bachelor's degree graduates who began their college careers at four-year institutions. . . [However,] . . . 25% of the baccalaureate degree recipients who had transferred from a community college had lost credits in the transfer process" (Carter, 1989, p. 66).

Studying community college to four-year transfers, House's (1989) findings "are consistent with previous reports of a grade decrement immediately after transfer. . . [They] . . . suggest that the grade decrement is lower when the student transfers later" (House, 1989, p. 146). Vaala (1989), reporting on a study at a large university in western Canada, indicates that survey respondents' grades declined an average of 0.5 on a 9-point grading scale following transfer to the university.

House's (1989) additional findings are "that the GPA of continuing transfer students rises after the first semester, until the GPA is equal to that of continuing native students." He further finds "that students who earned enough credits to transfer from community colleges to a four-year college as juniors showed significantly higher graduation rates and significantly lower dismissal rates from the same institution than students who transfer earlier in their college careers" (House, 1989, p. 146).

Trends in Transfer in California Community Colleges (1991) supports many of these findings and indicates that community college transfers to the University of California (UC) generally experience a grade point drop of 0.4 or 0.5 during their first year. "Transfers who were eligible for UC out of high school do virtually as well in upper division as do students who started at UC as freshmen. . . Transfers who were not originally eligible receive an upper division GPA that is 0.3 to 0.4 less than their native counterparts. The performance of community college transfers at UC has been similar to that of transfers to UC from other four-year institutions" (p. 33). Further, transfers "to UC who are Caucasians and Asian tend to have higher GPAs than do those who are African-American and Hispanic" (p. 38).

For transfers to California State University (CSU), data from the report entitled *Trends in Transfer in California Community Colleges* (1991) "suggest that the upper division GPAs of community college transfers are equal to those of juniors who began their work at a CSU campus" (p. 38). As for

persistence of transfers to a bachelor's degree, differences were noted between community college transfers to UC and CSU. "(W)ithin three years after transfer, two-fifths of community college transfers have graduated, two-fifths have left college for other reasons, and one-fifth is still enrolled. The University of California studies, by contrast, suggest that within three years, two-thirds of all transfer students have graduated and by the fourth year this proportion increases to 70%. Much of the difference between UC and CSU retention in upper division seems to be that more students transfer to CSU before completing their lower division work and that more CSU transfers attend part-time" (*Trends in Transfer in California Community Colleges*, 1991, p. 41).

Carter (1989) looked at national data to comment on persistence to the bachelor's degree. For students who began full-time in two-year public colleges, about 9% of blacks and Hispanics received their bachelor's degree in six years, compared to 19% of white students. Lavin and Crook (1990), in a longitudinal study of City University of New York entrants, determine that "(a)lmost 70 percent of white transfers received bachelor's degrees, but less that half of minority transfers did" (p. 404). They also report that it took longer for minority students to earn their bachelor's degrees than whites. In a study of transfers among four-year colleges, Kocher and Pascarella (1990) write more generally that "students who transfer have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than do their counterparts who persist at the initial college of enrollment. The deleterious consequences of transferring were markedly more pronounced for black-American men and women than they were for their white-American counterparts" (p. 173).

Owen (1991) at the University of Colorado compares native students who persisted with transfers from two-year and four-year institutions. He reports that four-year transfers initially earned grades comparable to those of natives and that all transfers by the beginning of their second year were performing comparably to natives. As for credit loads, "two-year transfer students took significantly lighter loads than 'native' students and four-year transfers throughout their college career" (Owen, 1991, p. 13). He also indicates that natives graduated faster than transfers.

Initiatives that Aid Transfer

Several authors have written about initiatives undertaken to maximize transfer. Coleman (1991), Williams (1990), Bender (1990), and *An Assessment of UCCTOP* (1988) first identified many motivators for these initiatives. Rising costs of higher education and the waste of repeating course content at the upper division level, a decline in transfer rates and low achievement rates of transfers, and national interest in the educational mobility of minority students, many of whom begin their education at community colleges, were identified by Coleman (1991).

About the Ford Foundation's funding of numerous transfer projects, *An Assessment of UCCTOP* (1988) reports "that deliberate intervention must be made because, left to their own devices, few students are sufficiently

skilled to maneuver through the processes in which they must engage in order to sustain a successful collegiate career, and few colleges exhibited sufficient commitment and curricular and instructional coordination that would have the effect of enhancing student flow on into the universities" (p. 4).

"The majority of two-year college students who transfer apply to nearby baccalaureate institutions. This fact would suggest the desirability of local institutional cooperation in fostering transfer; yet too frequently, the institutions act more like competitors . . . The increased activity of legislatures makes it apparent that the absence or failure of local voluntary articulation among public institutions will be met by state-level mandatory policies" (Williams, 1990, p. 8). Bender (1990) also agrees with this observation and adds the following: "A reading of state policies reveals an attitudinal posture worthy of note as well. Legislative resolutions dealing with transfer and articulation will, almost without exception, reflect a concern for the students' interest, . . . In sharp contrast, the interests of institutions can often be found in policies developed by state coordinating agencies or voluntary institutional organizations" (p. 8).

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Given these and other motivators, initiatives have been taken by states, two- and four-year institutions, and by external agencies to promote and aid transfer. Kintzer (1989) has written much about statewide and interinstitutional efforts noting that some states have passed legislation addressing transfer while other states have adopted policies or promoted voluntary interinstitutional or intersegmental agreements. Bender (1990) noted that in 1989 "at least 13 states considered bills or passed resolutions calling for action on transfer or articulations issues" (p. 8). Whether legislatively mandated or policy-based, state actions take four forms: state articulation agreements, state-level transfer/articulation bodies, transfer student services, and performance data and feedback systems (Bender, 1990).

State articulation agreements according to Bender (1990) have taken many forms: (a) some agreements recognize the associate in arts degree as meeting four-year institution's general education requirement, (b) others specify a general education core which must be honored by the four-year institution, (c) "Delaware and Rhode Island transfer policies call for transferability of all courses between the public institutions of the states" (p. 20), and (d) other agreements call for course or program comparability via means such as common course numbering systems, course equivalency guides, and computer-aided course requisite and comparability information.

Bogart and Murphey (1985) note that "Florida was the first state to develop and implement an statewide transfer agreement on general education requirements. . . In 1965, the Florida State Board of Education approved an articulation agreement which guaranteed the acceptance of

community college transfers at the junior level by the public state universities of Florida" (p. 18). Cepeda (1991) wrote about Assembly Bill 1725 which "directed the governing boards of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, . . . to jointly 'develop, maintain, and disseminate a common core curriculum in general education for the purpose of transfer,' and to adopt that curriculum" (p. 3).

Scott and Gelb (1983) share experiences of the University of Wyoming's initial development of a Course Transfer Guide which matched courses at the seven community colleges in Wyoming with those offered at the University. Later this effort was implemented through the Wyoming Higher Education Computer Network, a statewide computer network linking all eight institutions. This linking appears similar to SOLAR, Florida's on-line advisement and articulation system, or ASSIST, California's Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer.

Bender (1990) identifies transfer student services such as transfer/articulation officers; research projects that were funded by the Ford Foundation—(one to be presented later); and funding of scholarships for minority transfers by the states of Arizona, Florida, Illinois, and New York. Quoted in the *NASPA Forum*, Hauptman, who has worked for the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer, urges two financial incentives: provide four-year institutions with funds which encourage them to admit and retain transfers and increase aid available through federal and state grants to transfers (New Proposal, 1992).

Trends in Transfer in California Community Colleges (1991) reports on the impact of 20 pilot transfer centers between 1986 and 1990: "During the two years prior to full implementation of the pilot transfer centers (1985 and 1986), transfer rates at the Colleges that were to have transfer centers were lower than those rates at Colleges without centers. After implementation (1987-1990), this pattern was reversed: transfer rates at the transfer center Colleges have equaled and exceeded rates at the Colleges without centers" (p. 49). In Bender (1990), these transfer center activities are described as "making sure that transfer students have up-to-date information and providing workshops on admissions, financial aid, housing, how to fill out the applications, advertising, and making appointments for other four-year representatives, and providing trips to the universities. 'On-the-spot admissions' aimed specifically at affirmative action students generates large numbers of transfers" (p. 65).

Individual institutions or groups of institutions seek to support transfers through what Eaton (1990) describes as the "student service approach" and a "document model" which she sought to extend by proposing an academic model. Institutions use the student service approach to "concentrate on counseling, advising, catalog information exchange and other student affairs functions" and the document model by relying "on articulation agreements, course equivalency guides, system-wide regulations, or state policy or legislation to assist students" (Eaton, 1990, p. 3). She

proposes an academic model of transfer education focusing on campus-based academic practices. The academic model "emphasizes changes in academic practices as central to improving transfer; requires two-year/four-year faculty collaboration as essential to change in academic practices; stresses curriculum building and pedagogy development as points of critical intervention at which to change academic practices; calls for institutionalizing changes in academic practices; and confirms the value of changes in academic practices through longitudinal data collection and analysis" (p. 5).

Terzian (1990, 1991) conducted national surveys of two-year colleges to identify practices used to aid and encourage transfer. In 1991 the survey was expanded to include four-year institutions. He reports "that two- and four-year schools rely primarily on student service-based practices in dealing with the transfer function (and) the use of formal articulation agreements" (p. 4). Terzian urged greater collaborative involvement of two- and four-year faculty in transfer practices where "articulation agreements get replaced by educational partnerships that provide students with curricular paths built on identified intellectual and skills competencies rather than on tentative lists of equivalencies" (p. 4).

Transfer practices most frequently named by two-year institutions were written articulation agreements, transfer counselors, and course equivalency guides.

Transfer practices most frequently named by two-year institutions were written articulation agreements, transfer counselors, and course equivalency guides. Other strategies included articulated core curriculum for transfer students, guaranteed admissions to four-year institutions, transfer centers, and computerized course transfer information service.

> "In general, four-year institutions relied on fewer academic and student service practices to support the transfer process than their two-year counterparts. . .The two main practices employed by four-year institutions were transfer counselors/advisors and written articulation agreements. . . (F)our-year institutions were far less likely to involve faculty in academic practices (such as two-year/four-year departmental collaboration or faculty collaboration or joint degree programs) than were the two-year colleges" (Terzian, 1991, p. 4).

Orientation Programs that Contribute to Smooth Transfer

Moore (1981) enumerates the "cacophony of woes" besetting Sarah, a community college to four-year college transfer. She also proposes "five handy dandy ways to help transfer students succeed:

1. *Unpack the information* — Make information clear and digestible . . . analyze what it is transfers need to know 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.
2. *Develop more ways to connect with the transfer as a person* — . . . Must we keep relearning the lesson that personal involvement heightens learning?
3. *Provide basic credit and course evaluation as quickly as possible.* Students ought to have it before deciding to come. If the volume is high, analyze the process, what can be done automatically? Can a

technology be devised to do this? Or, better yet, can a policy be devised? Then staff have more time to work on *real* problems and give needed personal attention.

4. *Provide separate, distinct opportunities for transfers to receive an orientation.* . . . Even if it's more convenient, resist the urge to treat the transfer as an older freshman.
5. *Keep communication channels to two-year institutions open*" (p. 27).

With Moore's (1981) recommendations and an awareness of the student services, documentation, and academic models of transfer education, it is time to look at programs that contribute to smooth transfer. The activities to be shared below were identified from a review of the literature and from a November 1992 invitation to orientation directors at 200 junior, community, and four-year colleges and universities in the United States to submit their programs for inclusion in this publication.

From the Literature. Degus (1987) of Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, NY describes their 2 Plus 2 Cooperative Degree Programs with four public and four private institutions. Formal agreements have been signed with each institution and contain these features:

- one application fee and one set of academic records.
- concurrent acceptance to both institutions based upon MCC admission requirements.
- guaranteed admission to a four-year college with full junior status.
- specifically defined degree requirements.
- pre-designated GPA requirements for certain programs.
- departmental advisement of students enrolled in the program via comprehensive resource manuals and computerized degree audit sheets.
- routine correspondence between prospective four-year institutions and students enrolled at MCC.
- staff advisement support from four-year institutions while students are enrolled at the two-year college.
- semester notification by MCC to four-year institutions of academic progress of 2 Plus 2 students.
- pre-advisement/registration of students upon transferring (Degus, 1987, p. 7).

Heinrich and Gladstone (1990) write about their orientation program targeting adult learner registered nurses returning for their baccalaureate degrees at the University of Hartford. Their philosophy was that faculty and students constitute a community of adult learners. Invitations were sent out months in advance to assure knowledge and attendance. The principles guiding their program were to set the stage, to make it experiential, and to make it fun. Faculty acted out roles of adult learners on their first day of class with discussion following; students viewed and discussed *Suzi Stresstab*, a video on the juggling act of a working mother/student; discussion followed role plays on support systems, and more.

Heaney (1991) highlights programs that promote transfer for minority students. One she references is "The Ford Southwest Transfer

Educational Research Project" involving the Border College Consortium (BCC) in Texas. A guiding tenet is "that promoting transfer within predominantly Latino communities requires as much community college <—> community interaction as it does community college <—> four-year institution interaction . . . Border colleges must maintain strong articulation agreements with four-year institutions. They must also work to educate the students and their families who frequently 'exhibit a naivete about the costs and benefits of the higher education system.'" Border colleges were encouraged "to develop strong, visible transfer centers . . . , monitor (students') progress, and work with students to explore career and higher education options" (Heaney, 1991, pp. 16-17).

Another program with a minority student focus is Vassar College's comprehensive summer program. Weschler (1991) writes not only about the program which Vassar built upon a long-standing relationship with LaGuardia Community College in Long Island, NY, but also about five spin off programs involving liberal arts colleges and the two-year colleges with which they partnered. The Vassar program targets prospective transfers who had completed one year at one of five New York State community colleges. "The comprehensive Vassar program— designed to give students an understanding of academic, social, and residential life at a selective college— offered a five-week residential summer study institute to a racially diverse group of potential transfer candidates. . . . Students and peer counselors— themselves transfer students— lived together in a dormitory on the Vassar campus. Support personnel included a writing specialist from the academic resource center, a specialist in study skills, an adviser from the microcomputer center, and admissions and financial aid counselors.

> Faculty and staff members at the two-year colleges helped plan and implement the program and then designed and co-taught three courses that had the same range and scope as regular Vassar offerings. Each student selected two courses and received the equivalent of seven semester hours of academic credit. The partner colleges automatically accepted these credits towards the associate degree, and Vassar accepted these credits from the participants who ultimately transferred there (Weschler, 1991, p. 7).

Familiar with Vassar College's program and the beneficiary of almost one million dollars appropriated by the Arizona legislature, the University of Arizona created over 20 minority retention and recruitment programs including the Exploratory Transfer Institute. Elvin and Wood (1989) describe this program that in its pilot year involved faculty and student services staff of the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. Twenty-four minority students who previously were not considering transfer participated in a three-week, residential summer program that began with a two-day retreat involving students and staff. At its core were classes team-taught by Arizona and Pima faculty and developed on the theme of Communication: Human Survival/Creativity.

An Assessment of UCCTOP (1988) chronicles the Ford Foundation's initial support of 24 community colleges in their efforts to increase the number of minority students earning associate degrees and transferring to four-year institutions. In the second phase of its Urban Community Colleges Transfer Opportunities Program, "(t)he Ford Foundation selected five colleges from among the original 24 to receive from $100,000 to $225,000 each for three years in order to pursue activities related to student flow and to collect data evidencing their project's effect" (*An Assessment*, 1988, p. 67).

LaGuardia Community College, one of the Ford Foundation's beneficiaries, was mentioned above as a partner with Vassar College in an intensive, residential summer institute. However, their initiatives were many as illustrated in *An Assessment of UCCTOP* (1988). LaGuardia adopted two strategies - to provide better transfer information and to broaden transfer options. Under its transfer information emphasis, *An Assessment of UCCTOP* (1988) reported that LaGuardia "produced a Transfer Information Guide to assist students in selecting the best combination of courses to be used for transfer" (p. 69); "developed a Career Development Module to introduce educational and career planning in a required course" (p. 70); offered "a Transfer Seminar which focuses on planning for further studies, college selection, and application procedures and requirements" (p. 70); held a College Transfer Fair; and operates a Career and Transfer Resource Center.

Many institutions have established transfer centers and/or hired transfer counselors. These institutions often address a transfer's needs along the continuum of academic articulation, advising, and registration to the student's need to become familiar with the campus, the people, the support services, and the feelings of being a transfer.

To broaden transfer options, LaGuardia joined two senior institutions in the city system, Baruch College and Queens College, in implementing a joint admissions program. Of course, its program with Vassar College was part of this effort as was its partnership with Clark College to get its graduates to consider enrollment in an historically black college. Because many of its students transfer within the City of New York system, several initiatives were made with those institutions; for example, Long Island University offered courses on LaGuardia's campus.

From the Survey. Exciting efforts are underway at the institutions whose staff responded to our request for program information. Before citing specific examples, here is an overview. Many institutions have established transfer centers and/or hired transfer counselors. These institutions often address a transfer's needs along the continuum of academic articulation, advising, and registration to the student's need to become familiar with the campus, the people, the support services, and the feelings of being a transfer. Some institutions offer programs for prospective transfers, others offer summer or semester-before-enrollment programs for admitted transfers. There are "orientation week" programs for transfers and during-the-semester courses, mentor programs, and phone call follow-ups. At each step along the continuum, the focus varies as to how

much time is spent on academic integration needs and how much on the out-of-class and student support needs.

Now here are some examples. Community College of Allegheny County has its Transfer Office, Northern Illinois University its Community College Relations Office, and the University of Arizona its Center for Transfer Students. The Transfer Advisor at Flathead Valley Community College travels by van or bus with students who plan to transfer to the universities and colleges in Montana. She reports that the best part is the bonding that occurs while these students are on the road, since Montana is a big state.

Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) has signed articulation agreements with 14 public and private colleges and universities, most of them in Pennsylvania but also one each in Ohio and Virginia. Students completing an approved program of study will be accepted with junior class standing and guaranteed transfer of college level credits earned at CCAC. Transfer Office staff begin familiarizing students with the transfer process during CCAC's orientation program for new freshmen.

The University of Arizona's Center for Transfer Students sponsors several programs to support the transfer, retention, and graduation of transfer students. Included are its Transfer Summer Institute (TSI) and P.A.R.T.S. (Partnership to Aid and Retain Transfer Students). TSI, which evolved from the effort described above by Elvin and Wood (1989), is open to Arizona residents (racial/ethnic minority students preferred) who have completed 24 community college credits with certain grades. Following a two-day orientation/pre-registration period, students complete a three credit humanities course and attend workshops over a five-week period. Fifty minority students from Pima County Community College were selected in Fall 1992 to participate in P.A.R.T.S. This project features faculty mentorship, faculty-student colloquia, and enrollment in a transfer strategies course.

The Vital Connection Transfer Program of Colorado State University features a linkage between CSU and 15 Colorado community or junior colleges. Colorado State University provides community and junior college participants with advising assistance, use of the Transfer Guide, and major check sheets in program planning, semester-by-semester preliminary course evaluations, automatic consideration for transfer scholarships, priority for admissions consideration, and junior class designation.

Kansas State University sponsors a mid-semester Transfer Day. Invitations are sent to the 19 community colleges in the state of Kansas and students who have indicated an interest in transfer. Students only are charged a nominal fee to participate; spouses and parents are complimentary. The program features a campus tour, meetings with an academic advisor or faculty member, presentations on the application procedure, financial assistance, housing, and student life services. Southern Connecticut State University holds Transfer Open Houses in the spring for

prospective two-year college transfers. Each open house features a presentation about the transfer admissions process and another about the processes of transferring credit, registering, and advising. The day culminates with an opportunity for students to talk with academic and student affairs representatives in a college fair setting.

Penn State uses *Intro-UP* to provide information to students who will change their enrollment from one of the university's two-year locations to its University Park Campus. During the year prior to "transfer," students receive four issues of *Intro-UP*, each addressing topics that have relevance for that point in the transfer process. Brigham Young University sends information about its automated transfer evaluation system which provides a transfer student with the course evaluation and the degree-audit analysis the same day the student is admitted to the university.

Summer orientation programs show great variety. Some are day long, others two days in length. Components for spouses/parents often are provided, as are evening sessions, baby-sitting for transfers' children, and out-of-state transfer orientation programs

Summer orientation programs show great variety. Some are day long, others two days in length. Components for spouses/parents often are provided, as are evening sessions, baby-sitting for transfers' children, and out-of-state transfer orientation programs (mentioned by Arizona State University and the University of Arizona). "Alive! at Washington State University" includes one-on-one meetings with admission personnel for transcript evaluation, tours, and workshops on aspects of academic and co-curricular life. "Transitions," a series of vignettes acted out by orientation counselors, highlights issues of transfers and is followed by small group discussions.

Transfer Facts, an attractive four-color publication of Arizona State University, acquaints transfers with their in-state and out-of-state transfer programs, financial aid sources available to transfers, and the processes for application and evaluation of transfer credits. Arizona State University also has assembled a sought after transfer calendar. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, transfer students SOAR. Specific sessions of the Summer Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) program are designated for transfers. SOAR for transfers features placement tests, an overview of the evaluation of previous college credits, meetings with faculty advisors, registration by phone, and information about both academic and student support services.

Georgia Southern University, in an effort to improve the academic advising component of its transfer orientation program, provides its freshman summer orientation advisors with specialized training sessions. They, rather than faculty, advise transfer students. Northern Illinois University staff members lead parents and family members in a seminar that discusses "transfer shock" and other adjustments experienced by transfers.

"Grand New Beginnings" is the University of Nebraska's summer program for new or returning adult and transfer students. This session

includes a New Start presentation, a career planning and placement discussion, and academic planning and advisement. The program concludes with an informational browsing session and the opportunity to attend a dramatic arts production. The New Start presentation is derived from content of a one credit hour class which focuses on study skills, library usage, and non-traditional student concerns. A variation of this program is the University of Florida's one day, all academically oriented Former Students Returning program. Academic policies, especially those that have changed over time, are reviewed. Then students, most of whom are adult learners, attend college meetings, meet with an adviser, and register.

Rochester Institute of Technology does a good job of marketing its fall orientation program. After the fall schedule has been mailed and two weeks before the orientation program, each student is called by an Off-Campus Student Association representative and encouraged to attend. "Transfer Orientation" at Florida International University is a half-day, three-part program occurring prior to or during registration week. Peer advisors assist in the registration process and conduct a student panel during the introduction phase. Transfers meet with their advisors at the second phase; and lastly, transfers select from optional programs such as a campus tour, library tour, or career planning session.

Prior to fall and spring semester, the University of Kentucky provides separate orientation groups for transfer students. Many of these groups are led by upperclass students who have transferred themselves. About five to six weeks after the beginning of fall, orientation group leaders conduct a New Student Phonathon. Transfers are called and asked to raise questions and receive answers or referrals to appropriate resources. The Center for Transfer Students takes this idea a step further with Academic Achievement for College Transfers (AACT). Interested new transfer students complete an application and are paired for their first semester with a peer who has successfully made the transition.

Spring semester at the University of Florida features a "Transfer Appreciation Week," conducted by a student organization called the Campus Diplomats. The first event is a reception which several university administrators attend. After the reception, Campus Diplomats, administrators, and new transfers attend a basketball game. Later in the week, the Campus Diplomats present "Get Involved," which helps transfers learn how student organizations are structured, when they recruit members, and how to get a foot in the door. The final event of the week is usually a social at a campus eatery. During this week, Campus Diplomats and Phi Theta Kappa members call new transfers (transfer hook-up) to learn how their first month has gone. Problems are referred to Student Services and a response is provided within forty-eight hours.

Kean College of New Jersey has a seminar which those transfers entering with fewer than ten credits are advised to take. Many of these transfers are adult learners. Consequently, these adults are invited to an evening orientation program, which family members also are encouraged to

attend. Following welcomes from the college president and other officials, these transfers meet with their seminar classmates, instructor, and peer liaison assigned to the seminar.

e mix of academic, student affairs, nd document-based approaches varies and is determined in part by the point along the transfer continuum at which the program is offered.

In summary, several patterns for transfer orientation programs emerge. The mix of academic, student affairs, and document-based approaches varies and is determined in part by the point along the transfer continuum at which the program is offered. As transfer students increase in number and in institutional and political significance, more efforts and resources are put toward aiding their transition and retention. Institutions with a comprehensive approach feature faculty involvement, involve successful transfers in peer programs, and distribute focused literature which acknowledges the uniqueness of transfers. Transfers are a heterogeneous collection of people; consequently, programs are offered for them, their parents, spouses, and child care for their children.

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11

The Freshman Orientation Seminar: Extending the Benefits of Traditional Orientation

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In tracing the history of college orientation and its relationship to the curriculum, the decade of the 1980s may well be remembered as the period in which college courses designed to provide students an extended orientation experience became part of the standard course fare on the majority of American campuses. Although extended orientation courses are over 100 years old (Fitts & Swift, 1928), their numbers have increased exponentially over the past thirteen years, the period in which American higher education has witnessed a general ground swell of interest in first-year students—their success, retention, and the overall quality of their college experience. In this chapter, we will consider the extended orientation course, its history, characteristics, outcomes, and its relationship to traditional forms of orientation. Finally, we will explore how such a course can bring together a variety of campus constituencies to focus on the academic and social success of first-year students.

The term "freshman seminar" is often used to describe such an extended orientation course. But, in reality, that term has a number of precise meanings, depending upon one's institutional frame of reference. Recent national survey research (Barefoot, 1992; Barefoot & Fidler, 1992) found that many campuses offer freshman seminars with a decidedly academic focus—whether all sections address a common topic or theme or a variety of topics as chosen by each instructor. Freshman seminars are also taught for first-year students within professional schools such as engineering, agriculture, nursing, etc. These professional seminars perform an orientation function, but that orientation is often both to the professional discipline and its applications in the world of work and to the institution and higher education. Finally, freshman seminars are offered on some campuses in which the primary, if not single, focus is upon improving basic academic skills such as reading, writing, note-taking, and test-taking.

For the purposes of this chapter, we will focus on the freshman seminar in its most common role—as a course which offers students both a holistic and a developmental orientation throughout a term to the demands, expectations, and delights of college life. By terming this orientation experience "holistic," we mean that the freshman seminar addresses orientation broadly and introduces students not only to the places, people, and resources that comprise a college campus, but also to themselves as learners, leaders, and citizens of an academic community. By using the term "developmental," we propose that such a course is, or should be, intentionally designed to meet the normal developmental needs of all students as those needs occur on the students' timetable rather than on an arbitrary timetable established by the institution.

A Brief History of The Freshman Orientation Seminar

The history of freshman seminars is closely tied to the history of orientation itself. Special courses to orient freshmen were but one of a number of steps taken by institutions as early the late 1800s to prepare students more adequately for a successful college life. One of the first orientation courses on record was offered at Boston University in 1888 (Gordon, 1989). Other campuses such as the University of Michigan and Oberlin College implemented similar courses in the early 1900s. The first for-credit orientation course was established at Reed College in 1911 (Fitts & Swift, 1928) and was required for all entering students. Although in 1916 only six American colleges offered orientation courses for credit, 82 had established them within the next ten years (Brubacher & Rudy, 1958).

The numbers of orientation courses being offered on American campuses fluctuated during the mid-twentieth century, reflecting the changing attitudes and trends in American higher education. By the mid-1960s—the era in which higher education experienced a glut of students competing for limited spaces—this course type had become almost obsolete (Drake, 1966). The return of the freshman orientation seminar to the college campus began in the 1970s with the influx of diverse groups of students whose needs were not being met by existing, piecemeal orientation initiatives. Numbers of freshman seminars have continued a gradual increase until currently approximately two-thirds of American campuses offer such a course (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992).

The Relationship between Traditional and Extended Orientation

The freshman orientation seminar does not purport to replace traditional pre-matriculation or "first week" orientation experiences. Rather it builds on those initial non-credit activities by addressing student needs as they arise. The top priority of first-year women and men is often making friends and finding a comfortable niche in the new environment. The essentials for academic survival such as note-taking, time management, and personal wellness become major student interests only after a poor grade, an overdue paper, or an extra 15 pounds propels these essentials to the forefront.

Freshman orientation seminars offer students the opportunity to develop relationships with a single faculty member, staff member, or peer teacher who serve as course instructors and with a group of peers who are experiencing the same transition. Seminars also link curricular and co-curricular life by giving students the opportunity to apply academic processes such as reading, writing, group study, and oral presentation to a wide range of critical issues and concerns that fall outside the purview of a particular academic discipline.

As colleges and curricula have become more student-centered, there has been a growing recognition that, in order for students to be thoroughly and properly prepared for success in college, traditional forms of orientation must be expanded and that a "one-shot" approach, which may not meet a student's own developmental need-to-know, is simply not enough (Gardner, 1992a). Educators have also realized that such experiences merit academic credit. Thus, as of 1991, about 88% of freshman seminars carried academic credit applicable to graduation (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992).

Increasingly, researchers are generating data which clearly establish the linkage of participation in orientation activities—especially extended orientation seminars—to improved rates of retention, graduation, and a host of other positive outcomes of the college experience (Fidler, 1991; Fidler & Hunter, 1989; National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, 1993). After studying the positive, indirect effect of a two-day orientation experience on student persistence, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfle (1986) maintained that "extending the duration of a carefully conceived orientation experience would both reinforce and magnify its influence" (p. 172). Recent research conducted at Oregon State University examined students' perceptions of the college experience after participating in either traditional pre-matriculation orientation or extended orientation courses (Rice, 1992). Students who participated in the semester-long course felt more informed about the campus, were more likely to feel that they were treated as adults, and were more academically integrated than students who participated only in the week-long, pre-semester orientation.

Essential Objectives of Freshman Orientation Seminars: Joining Theory and Practice

Many freshman seminars were initiated before the emergence of substantive student development research and, therefore, without an intentional theoretical framework. Recent research and scholarship on college students, however, has validated the creation of small, interactive groups of first-year students taught by a "survivor" of his or her own first college year as a means to enhance participating students' success. The work of scholars and theorists such as Sanford (1969), Astin (1977a, 1977b), Pace (1984), Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), and Tinto (1987) provides a valuable framework for freshman programming including a freshman seminar. Three central concepts comprise this framework: a felt sense of community, increased quantity and quality of student

involvement in the life of the institution, and social and academic integration. Today, the vast majority of freshman seminars being implemented on American campuses have been intentionally designed to address one or more of these concepts as primary goals.

Community. Beginning in the early 1960s, Nevitt Sanford and his colleagues at Stanford University began doing research on college student development. In his 1969 classic, *Where Colleges Fail*, Sanford argued that colleges fail whenever they treat the student as less than a whole person; that learning depends on the whole personality, not merely intelligence. Not only are students often treated in a piecemeal fashion; Sanford also maintained that institutions themselves lack "coherence," and he despaired over what he considered the loss of institutional community. In his recent investigations of undergraduate education, Ernest Boyer (1987, 1990) also found that "new students have little sense of being inducted into a community whose structure, privileges and responsibilities have been evolving for almost a millennium" (1987, p. 43). He stated that "a successful freshman year program will convince students that they are part of an intellectually vital, caring community" (1987, p. 57).

Involvement. The correlation between student involvement and improved success/retention has been documented and researched by many educators, most notably Alexander Astin and Robert Pace. Astin (1984) defines involvement as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). Both Astin (1977a) and Pace (1984) maintain that "the amount of student learning and personal development . . . is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement" (Astin, 1977a, p. 223). In his longitudinal study of college dropouts, Astin (1977b) discovered that every positive factor related to student persistence could be explained in terms of the involvement concept.

Academic and social integration. The importance of student academic and social integration into college life has been a central tenet of Vincent Tinto's research. Tinto (1988) argued that social interactions are the primary vehicle through which new students become integrated into college life. But confounding this process is the lack of sufficient formal mechanisms that assure social interactions with other students and faculty. Tinto stated that "institutions must be sensitive to the separation and transitional difficulties new students face. Most orientation programs. . . fail to provide long-term assistance new students require. They should span the first six weeks of the first year, if not the first semester" (pp. 451-452).

Tinto's views on the importance of academic and social integration have been validated by numbers of other campus-specific studies. One of the most significant of these studies (Fidler, 1991) is the report of a 17-year investigation of the freshman seminar (University 101) at the University of South Carolina. Fidler found not only a significant relationship between participation in University 101 and freshman-to-sophomore

retention, but also that the most significant variables were "process" variables: that is, "University 101 participants are more likely than nonparticipants to achieve strong relationships with faculty . . . which reflects greater social integration" (p. 34).

Research on student behavior and development during the college years, and especially during the freshman year, has demonstrated that by implementing programs that increase a sense of community, student involvement, and academic/social integration of students, institutions can increase the likelihood of new student success. With that information in hand, colleges and universities have designed a variety of experiences, including extended orientation seminars, within which to accomplish these objectives.

Current Freshman Orientation Seminars in American Higher Education

In Fall 1991, researchers at the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina surveyed American colleges and universities to determine the nature and scope of freshman seminar programming in American higher education (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). Data collected by the Center indicates that freshman seminars are now offered on approximately two-thirds of American campuses. About 70% of such seminars can be categorized as "extended orientation" courses.

Generally, freshman orientation seminars are small classes (up to 25 students) which carry from one to three semester or quarter hours of academic credit, most frequently applied either to general education or elective requirements. Nearly half of institutions offering such seminars require them of all entering students. Seminars are taught most frequently by faculty members and student affairs professionals, but on increasing numbers of campuses, upper-level students are also involved as co-teachers or mentors.

Although some would argue that the most important function of the freshman seminar is the "process"—achieving community, involvement, and social/academic integration through improved levels of faculty-student interaction and the development of a peer support group, freshman seminars also have become a structure of choice within which to address a panoply of topics. Based on a thorough review of relevant literature, Cuseo (1991) recommends a range of topics for freshman orientation seminars such as the meaning, value, and expectations of a liberal arts education; self-concept and self-esteem; goal setting and motivation; learning skills; and self-management.

The 1991 National Survey has shown that current freshman seminars on American campuses focus on topics that can be categorized as either academic skills, knowledge of the institution and of higher education, and skills for living in and beyond college (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992). Table 1 presents these topics in descending order of their frequency as reported on the 1991 National Survey of Freshman Seminar Programming.

In addition to the above topics, educators use the freshman seminar to address a variety of changing campus issues which may affect student success and well-being. Sexual harassment, incidents of racial intolerance, or a particular campus tradition or event may become topics for a single seminar discussion or a major seminar focus. Freshman seminars are inherently flexible and permit changes in agenda or direction without any sacrifice to the essential processes of faculty/student or student/student interaction.

Table 1
Topics across all institutions (N = 612)

Subject	Frequency
Basic study skills	388
Time management	246
Campus facilities and resources	166
Wellness (alcohol/drug abuse, STDs, nutrition)	131
Relationship issues (roommates, dating, date rape)	116
Self knowledge/awareness/discipline/evaluation	113
Campus rules & regulations	110
Cultural diversity	88
Critical thinking and writing	78
Goal setting	71
Using the library	62
Liberal arts/general education	56
Purpose of higher education	55
Values clarification	53
History and mission of institution	48
Current societal issues	45

Note: This list includes only goals reported by at least 40 institutions. Percentages were not calculated because all institutions with freshman seminars did not answer the question.

Outcomes of Freshman Orientation Seminars

When colleges and universities make the decision to offer a freshman seminar, such a decision is often based upon the reputation this course type has achieved as one means to improve freshman-to-sophomore grade point averages, retention, and ultimately graduation rates of participating students (Fidler, 1991; Fidler & Hunter, 1989; Shanley & Witten, 1990). In fact, freshman orientation seminars have probably been subject to more forms of systematic evaluation than any other course in American higher education (Cuseo, 1991).

The 1991 National Survey (Barefoot & Fidler, 1992) indicated that increasingly freshman seminars are evaluated for their effect on such important process variables as increased levels of student involvement, more frequent out-of-class interaction with faculty, and higher levels of enthusiasm for the institution. Also, designers of seminars that include an intentional focus on such issues as sexual behaviors and decision making, cultural diversity, or values clarification will often measure resulting changes in attitudes and behaviors of participating students.

In addition to outcomes for participating students, freshman seminars result in a number of valuable outcomes for institutions and for faculty and staff who serve as seminar instructors. Such outcomes are infrequently measured but are often reported as unintended results of a freshman seminar program. Renewed campuswide attention to the function of teaching, especially the teaching of first-year students is a frequently reported outcome of implementing a freshman seminar. About 70% of seminar programs offer related instructor training activities

(Barefoot & Fidler, 1992), and these activities often become the catalyst for an institution-wide focus on the importance of interactive, student-centered instruction. For many instructors, the seminar serves as a laboratory for experimenting with innovative teaching strategies which may be transferred to more traditional classes. Finally, educators who serve again and again as freshman seminar instructors report that they look forward to the close relationships they form with each entering class and to following the progress of these students throughout the undergraduate experience.

Freshman Seminars Join Academic and Student Affairs

Prior to World War II, faculty had primary responsibility for virtually all facets of student life from orientation, or whatever passed as orientation, to graduation. But in the past 50 years, faculty roles have become increasingly specialized within disciplines, and faculty rewards have been linked almost exclusively to discipline-based research, scholarship, and teaching. Gradually, and all too willingly, faculty have relinquished any involvement in or responsibility for out-of-class activities. During this same period, the student affairs profession began its own process of professionalization and specialization and assumed more and more of the responsibility for student life out of the classroom. As the interests and activities of educators have become more specialized, institutions also have become increasingly fragmented by discipline and by scholarly interest so that now, on many campuses, there is little that brings together educators across departmental or division lines.

Although higher educators despair over the various schisms that divide the campus and create for many students a fragmented, incoherent educational experience, creation of meaningful partnerships between student affairs professionals and faculty is a difficult and uncommon occurrence in American higher education. A focus on first-year students through an extended orientation seminar is one means to bring together these two sides of the academic "house" to share perspectives, expertise, and creative ideas on behalf of a common goal—the success of first-year students.

By their very nature, freshman orientation seminars, if they are to be effective and if they are to enjoy strong campuswide support, require input and interest of both faculty and student affairs professionals (Gardner, 1986). And when student affairs professionals and faculty work together, they learn from each other. Faculty who are generally unfamiliar with the body of literature and research on student characteristics and development have the opportunity to learn and apply that new information in the freshman seminar classroom. Student affairs professionals, conversely, can gain a clearer understanding of the academic goals of the institution and can design programs that support those goals.

Currently, freshman seminars are taught on American campuses by faculty, student affairs professionals, campus administrators, and a host

of other interested individuals including alumni, trustees, graduate students, and upper-level undergraduates. In addition, there are a number of excellent freshman seminar programs on American campuses which bring together a faculty member and a student affairs professional to design and teach a single freshman seminar class. In such team-taught classes, each instructor brings her or his own particular strengths to this process whether those strengths are in group facilitation, in helping students with personal development issues, or in a particular academic area.

Whoever teaches the freshman orientation seminar, the initial planning for and maintenance of such a course should be accomplished by a campuswide coalition representing both faculty and students affairs professionals. A carefully designed freshman seminar can intentionally and successfully link in-class and out-of-class experiences into a coherent whole for the benefit of first-year students. Such a classroom experience can dramatically increase the likelihood that entering students will experience both academic and social integration—key elements of a successful transition to college life (Tinto, 1987).

How to Start a Freshman Seminar

Although the majority of American colleges and universities now offer freshman seminars, the process of getting such a course started—or, for that matter, implementing *any* substantive curriculum change—is not an easy one. In observing how hundreds of such courses have been started, however, a fairly clear pattern of a workable change process has emerged. This process is described below as ten steps to a freshman seminar.

Step 1. Find a credible proponent who will advocate this idea. When he or she argues for such a course, other campus leaders will rally around, listen, and follow.

Step 2. Identify and articulate the institutional problems that the freshman seminar is designed to improve. Such problems may include the need for more writing, better study skills, preventive health education, etc.

Step 3. Bring together representatives of both academic and student affairs in the initial course planning stages by creating a planning "task force" with representation from all key sectors of the institution.

Step 4. Circulate the initial draft proposal widely. Invite feedback and criticism from your opponents. When people do not know what is being proposed, rumors proliferate, and it is much easier to deal with possible opposition early in the change process.

Step 5. To avoid reinventing the wheel, explore models of freshman seminars at other institutions. Hundreds of colleges and universities, including your institutional peer group as well

as the peer group to which you may aspire, offer a wide variety of freshman seminar courses. Information on these courses can be obtained from the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina.

Step 6. Submit the course proposal via the correct channels, especially through the faculty governance mechanisms. Educate faculty senate members in advance so that they are thoroughly informed about the proposal before it is considered on the floor of the senate.

Step 7. Find an appropriate home for the seminar. Many alternative homes may exist depending upon the unique nature of the institution. Some examples are: provost's office; interdisciplinary studies departments; psychology, sociology, and education departments; divisions of student affairs, etc.

Step 8. Propose to offer the seminar experimentally for one or two years. Agree to evaluate and then to continue offering the course only if it succeeds in achieving its objectives. Such an eminently fair and reasonable proposal will make rejection less likely and is an important strategy to meet the concerns of detractors.

Step 9. Recruit instructors who are most likely to teach in ways that assure the objectives of the seminar will be met, and provide *mandatory* training for these instructors. There is nothing more essential to the success of a freshman seminar than training new seminar faculty. This training should also be open to other faculty, staff, and administrators on the campus to build a broader base of support for the new course.

Step 10. Offer a pilot. Start with a few sections to insure greater quality control, evaluate those sections, disseminate the results, make whatever course modifications are indicated by the results of the evaluations, and then expand.

For a more complete discussion of how to start a freshman seminar course, see Gardner (1989), Smitheram (1989), and Von Frank (1985).

Recommendations

Based upon our own experience with the 20-year old freshman seminar program at the University of South Carolina in addition to the information we have obtained from other educators around the country, we offer the following recommendations to educators who are considering the implementation of a freshman orientation seminar or who currently administer or teach such a seminar.

1. All colleges and universities should offer some type of a freshman orientation seminar. Such a course should be intentionally designed to

build a sense of campus community (Boyer, 1987), to encourage student involvement in the life of the campus (Astin, 1977a, 1977b), and to facilitate the academic and social integration of new students (Tinto, 1987).

2. A freshman orientation seminar program should include seminar sections for all types of new students including transfer students and others with specific needs (i.e., older students, undecided students, honors students, etc.).

3. A freshman orientation seminar should be a natural outgrowth of traditional orientation activities. Therefore, freshman seminar directors and orientation administrators should work closely together to assure that there is a logical flow from one set of activities to another.

4. Freshman orientation seminars should be of no more than 25 students (preferably 15 - 20 students) to assure substantive interaction between the students themselves and between the instructor and each student.

5. Freshman orientation seminars should carry academic credit that applies toward graduation. Ideally, such courses should comprise 45 - 48 contact hours per semester (three semester hours). Restricting a course to 16 contact hours (one semester hour) severely restricts the quantity and quality of information that can be covered.

6. Freshman orientation seminars should be designed by a campus coalition comprised of faculty, academic administrators, academic support professionals, student affairs professionals, and students. A course which has had initial input from a variety of campus constituencies has a better chance for broad campus ownership and long-term support.

7. Freshman orientation seminars should be taught by full-time faculty or staff with appropriate academic credentials (e. g., minimum of a master's degree). Such individuals are more likely to be able to intervene effectively on behalf of first-year students if and when the need arises.

8. Seminar instructors, whether they are faculty, student affairs professionals, campus administrators, or others, should undergo training to prepare them for this unique instructional experience. Teaching a freshman seminar is unlike teaching any other traditional course, and all instructors, no matter what their level of disciplinary expertise, need assistance with assuring that the essential processes—creation of a peer support group, and class interaction—actually take place (Gardner, 1992b).

9. Freshman seminar instructors should never be coerced into teaching the course. Rather instructors should be selected who express an interest in working with first-year students.

10. Freshman orientation seminars should involve upper-level students as co-teachers or mentors. These students should undergo some form of training to prepare them for their co-teaching/advising roles, and they should be compensated in some way for their time and effort (i.e., money, academic credit, free residence hall accommodations, etc.).

11. Freshman seminars should integrate the academic and social aspects of college orientation through substantive academic work such as reading, writing, library work, examinations, and public presentations.

12. Freshman seminars should introduce students to higher education and the relationship of its various curricular components (i.e., liberal arts, the major, professional curricula).

13. Freshman seminars should not be designed as remedial courses but rather as a sound foundation for all new students.

14. Whatever outcomes are intended as a result of the freshman orientation seminar, these outcomes should be evaluated and reported. Freshman seminars share with all non-traditional courses a somewhat tenuous position within the curriculum, and thus they repeatedly must prove themselves effective in order to survive.

Conclusion

The freshman orientation seminar is a dynamic, evolving course type which has been meeting the needs of generations of new students for over 100 years. By extending students' orientation to the campus and to higher education throughout a term, freshman seminars have been a proven, effective means to facilitate student success and retention. In light of the constant changes in the demographic characteristics of entering students, in higher education institutions themselves, and in the greater society, freshman seminars will be needed more than ever in years to come. Therefore, these courses should become an even greater priority for resource allocation and should not bear a disproportionate burden of fiscal cutbacks just because they lack traditional and powerful department caretakers.

The offering of an extended orientation seminar by a college or university is an indication of that institution's willingness to accept a major share of the responsibility for new student success. By designing a course that intentionally addresses the variables affecting the quality of the first year experience, higher education institutions are taking proactive steps to insure that entering students will be better prepared to take advantage of all that the total college experience has to offer.

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12

New Student Orientation and Technology: Oxymoron or Allies?

Gary L. Kramer
Brigham Young University

The computer is a welcome and inevitable resource in the delivery of the new student orientation program. Although technology can provide opportunities for program improvement, the challenge is to seek balance between its use and the services provided by orientation leaders. After all, the aims of technology are to relieve clerical burdens and enable people to be more student-centered. Thus the ideal blend is to use machines to provide the timely collection, storage, distribution, and management of information and allow orientation personnel to aid students beyond the routine. Technology enhances new student orientation because it simply uses machines to do what they do best—assess and provide access to important student information. Orientation planners are freed to individualize services.

Are the goals of the orientation program the same for both the institution and the new student? How and when are the resources of the institution marshalled to address the needs of the entering student? Are institutional and student goals compatible?

The use of technology in orientation, as illustrated in this chapter, not only adds to program effectiveness and efficiency, but it also provides needed time to focus on student development. Bringing together, as orientation planners are prone to do, student potential for personal and academic development and the institution's vast resources and educational opportunities, is no small challenge. Simply, the better we meet this challenge as part of new student orientation, the more likely students are to gain confidence in their ability to succeed academically, to become more involved in the academic community, and consequently to obtain their educational goals.

Orientation planners must respond to a variety of student needs, including the needs of new transfer students. Serving these students effectively requires a blending of technology with the goals of the new student orientation program. The following sections describe ways in which

technology can play an important role in enhancing the new student orientation process. Without being institution-specific, each section introduces, from point of admission through the on-campus orientation program, the use of technology and, in particular, how it enhances the work of the orientation leader. Some of the uses of technology in this chapter suggest a residential campus environment. However, the suggestions provided certainly apply, with some modifications, to commuter campuses as well.

The premise of the orientation process as described in this chapter is that the most important issue with which new students must wrestle is the place of academics in their lives, particularly its impact on their intellectual and personal development. Thus, the technology described in this chapter focuses on the collection, organization, reproduction, and use or management of academic information.

The first section of this chapter asks when orientation should begin and what are its primary purposes. A beginning place for orientation, as the next section suggests, is an academic freshman profile for new entering students. An automated and highly student-centered document provides (a) individualized course planning information based on academic preparation, (b) campus resource information that matches expressed student need or interest and guides the student toward involvement in the institution, and (c) a personal note and invitation to meet with an assigned faculty advisor.

The next section provides another example of how technology and orientation interface. A computer system is introduced that is designed to communicate to transfer students the institutional course equivalencies. A comprehensive automated transfer evaluation system can provide students with a degree-progress report that integrates an established database of courses taken at other schools.

Finally, the last section of this chapter describes the critical and delicate balance required to integrate touch-tone telephone (TTT) technology with new student course scheduling. In particular, this section discusses an enhancement of TTT. Going beyond TTT provides users with a visual exploration of and dynamic interaction with the institution's student information system. The availability of personal academic information allows students timely and convenient access to academic progress and planning information when they need it. The advantages of using technology in the orientation program are summarized at the end of this section.

When Does Orientation Begin?

The obvious answer to this question is "on student admission." The answer, however, only brings up a number of other questions. What are the primary purposes of new student orientation? Are the goals of the orientation program the same for both the institution and the new student? What does the new student expect from the institution and, more

precisely, from the orientation process? On the other hand, what does the institution expect of its new students? How and when are the resources of the institution marshaled to address the needs of the entering student? Are institutional and student goals compatible?

Knowing who is entering the system and how they are progressing provides an opportunity to develop effective programs that enhance freshman success. Hodgkinson (1985) supplies an answer to some of the questions posed above: "Educators need to see the educational system from the perspective of the people who move through it" (p. 1). In addition, the research literature is quite clear and consistent about the importance of these three points: (a) new students perceive orientation to the academic discipline and to career-related goals as the primary objectives of the orientation program; (b) new students seek assistance with the process involved in academic and career planning; (c) orientation planners should maximize opportunities for new students and the faculty to become acquainted, to interact, and to form a foundation for future contacts and associations.

Obviously, research does not imply that personal and social needs are unimportant. New student orientation should balance and keep in appropriate perspective the cultural, social, and recreational programs, as well as personal resources available in the college community. But orientation planners can facilitate the essential purpose of orientation—which is academic development—by initiating and creating a learning environment that (a) promotes self-awareness and assessment, (b) provides an integration of and assistance with academic and career planning, (c) supports planning for decision making, and (d) offers exposure to a variety of campus resources and individuals.

Preparing the New Student for Academic Planning

The discussion above focuses on what newly admitted students seek first from the institution and where they fit academically. There is valuable information in the admissions office to address this concern. The orientation process begins with profiling new student information from the admissions office.

The Freshman Profile

Stemming from data in the admissions office, an automated freshman profile (Appendix A) can individualize the new student's academic information for class scheduling purposes. Distributed to students soon after they are admitted and before registration begins, the personal profile data can (a) identify appropriate English and math courses or honors curriculum based on high school preparation courses and a nationally normed entrance examination, (b) respond to student requests for tutorial services information in specific academic areas, (c) connect interests with the academic curriculum, and (d) match co-curricular activities with students' expressed need.

The automated freshman profile integrates information from national entrance exams (i.e., ACT) to determine student interest and need(s), as well as academic preparation. The profile can match student responses with institutional resources to provide ways for the new student to become involved in the institution. An important function of the freshman profile should be to connect the incoming student with a faculty advisor. In sum, use of this technology to initiate the academic planning process accomplishes three purposes: (a) creating a sense of academic institutional "fit" by recommending critical freshman courses on the basis of a review of the high school transcript and national exam scores, (b) matching institutional resources with student expressed needs and interests, and (c) involving faculty with new students.

Pre-Campus Student-Led Seminars

The personal touch can only enhance the freshman profile concept. If sent in advance of the registration process and before the student arrives on the campus, trained orientation leaders need to be involved in compiling the profile. They can help relate profile information to the college experience. To complement this useful technology, orientation leaders, primarily students, could receive training to conduct new student seminars in locales of admitted students. Conducted during the spring or summer, the seminars provide new students firsthand assistance with fall registration and with general preparation to attend the university in the fall. As a result, new students can receive personal assistance and essential information to help them make the transition to university life before they arrive on campus. These orientation leaders can guide groups of new students, organized by geographic regions, to plan a course of study their first semester, consistent with the new student's freshman profile.

Academic Advising and Orientation

Through the combined efforts of the freshman profile and the pre-campus seminars, the new student completes an essential step in the orientation process—course planning. Once the student arrives on campus in the fall, the first orientation event should be in the student's college or department advisement center. Since new students complete the registration process before they arrive on campus, the emphasis of the on-campus orientation program should be to introduce them to key personnel in the academic discipline including college and departmental advisors.

The on-campus orientation program should provide students an opportunity to interact with faculty and advisement personnel. The orientation program should provide new students several occasions to become acquainted with the vast resources and educational opportunities available at the institution. This is also a time for students to adjust and solidify academic plans for the semester. In summary, through college or departmental advisement centers, students can receive personalized advising services that help in planning an educational program consistent with their interests, abilities, and academic goals.

Using Technology to Communicate Degree Requirements and Progress

At orientation the new student should also receive information on institutional degree requirements. The degree audit or progress report system is a technical program that can easily convey this information. This technological advising tool serves as the heart of the academic advising process because it frees orientation leaders and advisors from clerical burdens. Although these reports go to all undergraduates to aid in academic planning, they especially help the new student (a) to verify current enrollment, and (b) to envision all university and degree requirements (Appendix B). For the new transfer student, the progress report is especially important because it includes evaluations of transfer work as it relates to university graduation requirements.

Designing an automated transfer evaluation system reduces a backlog of transcripts from transfer institutions, notifies students as soon as possible of transfer equivalencies, and involves as well as informs the academic community in the transfer evaluation process.

Automated Transfer Evaluation System

For the new transfer student, delays in transfer course evaluations often occur in a process that involves several offices (the offices of admissions, registration or records, and the academic department). The holdup often leaves students without vital academic information for weeks into the first semester or term—sometimes students are left uninformed about course equivalencies until they apply for graduation, which leads to poor academic planning that may require course or even program changes.

Designing an automated transfer evaluation system reduces a backlog of transcripts from transfer institutions, notifies students as soon as possible of transfer equivalencies, and involves as well as informs the academic community in the transfer evaluation process. Most important, the new transfer student has critical academic progress and planning information even before classes begin. Thus the interface of technology with orientation often brings advisor and student closer together. This can contribute to the quality of the academic experience by providing orientation leaders and advisors valuable time to address the new transfer student's expectations, needs, and interests.

Touch-tone Telephone (TTT) Technology and Orientation

TTT registration continues to be a very successful program because (a) almost everyone in the country has access to a TTT, and (b) it gives simple, direct access to the institution's registration system. The integration of orientation leaders and academic advisors in the system will naturally create a successful system. Students, especially freshmen, want and need knowledgeable advisors who are both available to and interested in them. Key is the involvement of advisors in student registration who build on a student's sense of belonging to the college community.

TTT registration, however, is only as good as the access to accurate information it provides and the involvement of advisors who are well

informed and available when students need them. It also provides clear and concise materials that guide the student through the registration process and complement the advising program. For example, institutions need to communicate to the entering student what materials and deadlines will be forthcoming. That is, upon admission, what will the student receive next, when will it arrive, and what is the expectation for the student to respond? This allows the institution to coordinate and prioritize information and effectively control what is important for the entering student to know.

Student Academic Information Management

Once the elements of a well defined and integrated advising program are in place, other steps beyond TTT technology can further improve the quality of time spent with students. Degree audit reports and TTT are good technologies, but they are not sufficient, especially in a dynamic, multiple-optioned, and complex environment for delivering academic data to new students. For example, although the TTT is a very popular technology, the telephone keypad can limit and burden access to information. The limitation of the degree-audit is paper; the information can almost immediately become outdated once it is printed or distributed. The trend in technology is strongly to optimize user and machine interface.

Consider the expansion of course registration as an example of user and machine interface. Because of its limitation, TTT technology cannot allow users to register effectively by need or interest. It simply would take too much time and be extremely cumbersome. Yet given technological developments, a user can, by interacting with a menu on a terminal screen, enroll in courses by instructor or requirement deficiency. If a course is full for the upcoming semester, the user can identify courses available in the academic year or determine when the instructor will teach the needed course again.

Academic information management for students is important and it embodies the following three elements: (a) provides students critical academic information planning information when needed, (b) assesses and provides access to student academic information for the academic community, and (c) frees people to individualize services. The idea is to provide the user with a visual exploration of and dynamic interaction with the institution's student information or data system. Here is a menu of academic items that students should be able to call up instantly:

1. Address/Phone Change
2. Apply for Graduation
3. Class Schedule
4. Course Availability
5. Grades and Transcript
6. General Education Progress

7. Individual Information
8. Instructor Schedule
9. Progress within the Major
10. Shopping for a Major
11. PIN Number Change
12. Registration
13. Transfer Classes and Course Equivalencies
14. Transfer Work/Grades
15. Exit from the Menu

Using technology to provide students timely and convenient access to important and personal academic information takes the pressure off advisors and orientation leaders who would otherwise have to provide mundane and routine data for students. Students can access the data themselves and then seek advice from professional staff and faculty members.

Summary

This chapter has explained the interrelationship between technology and orientation leaders. Indeed, the intent of the chapter is to show that technology and people can work as allies in providing services to the new student. The title of this chapter queries whether the two are compatible or if they are a contradiction in terms: an oxymoron. Hopefully, the reader has gained an appreciation for the distinct, yet important, roles technology and people play in the orientation program.

The chapter has suggested that orientation actually begins upon admission of the student. In particular, as part of the orientation process, the institution should gather what it knows about its entering students. The more we know about our students, their needs, interests, and academic preparation, the better the orientation program can support student-institutional fit. For example, the research literature is quite clear that when students are well-suited to the institution and program they choose, they are more likely to have academic success. Thus, to assist orientation leaders in their attempt to provide an environment for academic success, the chapter has explored several technologies, including the automated freshman profile, a degree audit report, TTT technology, and a video terminal program designed to provide students academic information management. The chapter has also proposed that the success of these technical programs hinges on the direct involvement of orientation leaders, advisors, and faculty members.

Conclusion

Beginning with the admission of the new student to the institution through the on-campus orientation program, which for many students can occur several months after formal admission, the goal of using technology in the orientation program is to make the process more student-

centered. Technology cannot and should not replace people in the orientation program, but should be integral to any successful orientation program. Used correctly, technology provides several advantages for the student, the orientation leader (advisor), and the institution.

For the Student

Technology gives convenient and timely access to critical academic planning information, immediate feedback, and a sense of control (partnership) in the academic planning process.

For the Orientation Leader (Advisor)

Technology allows for a student-centered program that focuses on student issues and concerns beyond the routine. It provides opportunities and valuable time to promote student development while creating networks in the academic community to coordinate institutional resources on behalf of new students.

For the Institution

Technology provides clerical relief, professionalizes both the orientation and advising program, supports cost-effective resource management, and minimizes the bureaucratic tendencies of an institution.

Reference

Hodgkinson, H. L. (1985). *All one system: Demographics of education—kindergarten through graduate school.* Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Suggested Reading

Kramer, G. L., Taylor, L. K., Rich M., & Udarbe, J. (In press). Using an automated freshman profile to advise the first-year student. *Journal of The Freshman Year Experience, 5*(2).

Appendix A

Dear _____: Date

Congratulations on being accepted at Brigham Young University! We look forward to your arrival.

As your faculty advisor, I have particular interest in helping you with matters relative to your university experience as a whole and your major in particular. As you move from high school to university life, please consider the following recommendations. Based on your previous preparation, these course recommendations from our College Advisement Center seem most appropriate. These suggestions stem from a review of your application materials and are designed to guide you toward academic success at the University.

Of course, you can consult your class schedule for options to this list, and I invite you to work with our Advisement Center on these choices. Be assured that if a particular course is unavailable during your first semester, it will be available later.

On your BYU admissions application, you listed Early Childhood Education as your major. An emphasis in Early Childhood Education leads to a degree that includes dual certification in both early childhood and elementary education (in cooperation with the Department of Education). The kindergarten endorsement can only be obtained as part of the Early Childhood Certificate. Students in this major are certified to teach kindergarten through primary and intermediate grades in public schools as well as in private and public preschools. Early Childhood Education teachers provide the context of the natural environment and help children make the transition from home to a formal school setting.

To begin academic work in your major, register for Family Science 160 or Family Science 210.

If you have changed your major since applying to BYU or would like further information on General Education classes, please review the enclosed information. It provides a more comprehensive list of freshman classes related to university and major requirements.

English: It is recommended that you take English 115 or Philosophy 105
You indicated that you need help in reading or writing skills. BYU has a Reading/Writing Center located in 1010 Jesse Knight Humanities Building (JKHB). Ask for Phillip Snyder, (801) 378-4306.

Math: It is recommended that you register for Math 99.
You indicated that you need help in math. BYU has a math tutoring service found in 60 Knight Mangum Building (KMB). Ask for Jacqueline Taylor-Ortega, (801) 378-4895.

Foreign Language: If you want to pursue the Foreign Language option in General Education (GE), you should begin your study of a foreign language as soon as possible. Placement tests are available.

University: It is strongly recommended that you take Book of Mormon (Rel A Requirements 121). You may also want to register for either Health 129 (Hlth 129), Physical Education 129 (PE S 129), or American Heritage (A Htg 100).

After reviewing your extracurricular interests expressed on the ACT, I recommend that you contact these offices directly:
DEPARTMENT CLUBS—Tamara Quick, 329 ELWC, (801) 378-3111
DRAMATICS/THEATER—Charles Whitman, F475 HFAC, (801) 378-4575
PUBLICATIONS—John S. Gholdston, 547 ELWC, (801) 378-7100
VOCAL MUSIC—Ron Staheli, E442 HFAC, (801) 378-6115

Please contact our College Advisement Center if you have questions about the application of advanced placement (AP) credit to fulfill GE requirements.

I have enclosed some material that may help you understand the academic terminology used at BYU and the keys needed for academic success. I wish you well and look forward to meeting you at Orientation (Thursday, August 26th). In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me (see address and phone number below) or our Advisement Center, 2254 SFLC, (801) 378-3541.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Jean M. Larsen
Family Sciences Department
1319A SFLC
Provo, UT 84602
(801) 378-3369

Appendix B

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
ABC/GRADUATION PROGRESS REPORT

August 4, 1992

COLLEGE ENGINEERING & TECH COMMENCEMENT MAJOR DEGREE BS MFG ENGIN TECH MINOR

JOE B STUDENT
770 N 600 E
PROVO, UT 84604

UNIVERSITY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	REQUIRED	CLASS/CREDIT HOURS OR EVALUATIONS COMPLETED		DEFICIENT	CURRENT ENROLLMENT (NOT INCLUDED IN CALCULATION OF DEFICIENCIES)
ACADEMIC SKILLS					
PRE-COLLEGE MATH	1	MATH 099		0	
FRESHMAN ENGLISH	1	COMP 101	TR	0	
ADVANCED WRITING	1				ENGL 316
FOR LANG OR ADV MATH	1	GERM 330		0	
ARTS AND SCIENCES CORE					
BIOLOGY	1	BIOL 100		0	
PHYSICAL SCIENCE	1			1	
AMERICAN HERITAGE	1			1	AHTG 100
HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION	2			2	
ARTS AND SCIENCES ELECT	4	PHSCS 121		1	
NATURAL SCIENCE (MAX 1)					
SOC/BEHAVIOR SCI (MAX 2)		FLC 210			ECON 110
ARTS AND LETTERS (MAX 2)		PHIL 110			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	2	PE S 181		1	
HEALTH	1	WAIVED		0	
PHYSICAL FITNESS	1			1	
BOOK OF MORMON**	2	REL A 421		1	REL A 422
NEW TESTAMENT**	1	REL A 211		0	
DOCTRINE & COVENANTS**	1	REL C 324		0	
BYU RELIGION HOURS	4.0	REL C 325		2.0	
UPPER DIVISION	40.0	22.5		17.5	7.0
RESIDENCE HOURS	30.0	51.0		0.0	
TOTAL HOURS*	128.0	99.5		28.5	16.0

*D CREDIT ALLOWED 18.0 EARNED 0.0

BYU RELIGION HOURS ARE REDUCED BY COURSES TAKEN AT BYU THAT FILL THE REQUIREMENTS MARKED

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

555-55-5555

DEPARTMENT	TECHNOLOGY	YEAR TERM ENTERED	91 WINTER
MAJOR	MANUFACTURG TECH	MINIM RESIDENCE HRS REQ	30.0
SPECIALIZATION	MFG ENGIN TECH	MAJOR HOURS COMPLETED	54.8
CODE	395320	MAJOR GPA	3.35
		DEGREE	BS

9 HOURS TECHNICAL ELECTIVES REQUIRED--SEE MET ADVISOR IN COURSE SELECTION

****

PREPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION TO PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM UPON COMPLETION OF THE FOLLOWING COURSES WITH A GRADE OF C- OR BETTER. ACTUAL GPA CUTOFF IS DEPENDENT UPON THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS.
COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**4 CLASS(ES)

MET 131		3.0	A
MATH 110	TR MATH 101	3.3	A
MATH 111	TR MATH 131	3.3	C
DET 112	SB DET	3.0	A-

THIS REQUIREMENT IS COMPLETE

****

PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**13 CLASS(ES)

MET 224			
MET 225		3.0	A
MET 229			
MET 230			
MET 331		3.0	A-
MET 332			
MET 335		4.0	A
MET 336	CURR REPEAT	3.0	B+
MET 338			
MET 360	NOT COUNTED	3.0	D-
MET 430			
MET 431			
CHEM 105	TR CHEM 107	2.7	A

8 CLASS(ES) DEFICIENT

****

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**4 CLASS(ES)

MET 291R	0.0	P

AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**3 CLASS(ES)

MET 391R	0.5	P

AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**1 CLASS(ES)

MET 491R WAIVED	0.0	WV

5 CLASS(ES) DEFICIENT

****

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
** 1 CLASS(ES)

MET 399R			
MET 498R			

DEFICIENT--NO CLASSES COMPLETED

****

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**10 CLASS(ES)

EET 314	SUBST NEEDED		
DET 310			
CS 131	TR MATH 105	2.7	C
ECON 110	CURR ENROLLED	3.0	
ENGL 316	CURR ENROLLED	3.0	
MATH 112	TR MATH 130	3.3	B
PHSCS 121		3.0	B
PHSCS 122	TR PHYS 141	2.7	C
CIV E 203		3.0	A-
CIV E 103		2.0	A

4 CLASS(ES) DEFICIENT

****

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:
**2 CLASS(ES)

CHEM 106	TR CHEM 113	3.3	A
CHEM 152		3.0	A

THIS REQUIREMENT IS COMPLETE

****

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CONTACT YOUR ADVISEMENT CENTER AT
264 CB (EXT: 4325)
FACULTY ADVISOR: JOHN W. SMITH
ADDRESS: 436-D CTB
EXT: 2931

555-55-5555

CURRENT ENROLLMENT
WINTER 1991

ECON	110	001	3.0	MET	490R	001	2.0
ENGL	316	003	3.0	REL A	422	002	2.0
AHTG	100	001	3.0	MET	336	001	3.0

UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

TRANSFER CLASSES
UNIV OF ILLINOIS
ATTENDED 84-86

CHEM	107	2.7 A
GER	202	2.7 A
MATH	101	3.3 A
GER	201	2.7 P
ENGR	150	2.0 A
CRJ	101	2.7 A
GER	203	2.7 A
CHEM	112	3.3 B
COMP	101	2.7 C
CHEM	113	3.3 A
COMP	102	2.7 C
GER	221	2.7 B
MATH	130	3.3 B
MATH	131	3.3 C
MATH	195	2.7 C
PHYS	141	2.7 C

BYU CLASSES
SPRING TERM 1987

DET	212	3.0 A-
MATH	099	0.0 P
PHSCS	121	3.0 B
REL C	324	2.0 A

SEM GPA 3.51

SUMMER TERM 1987

FLC	210	3.0 A
MET	131	3.0 A
PE S	181	0.5 B
REL C	325	2.0 A

SEM GPA 3.94

FALL 1987

BIOL	100	3.0 A
CIV E	103	2.0 A
GERM	330	3.0 A-
REL A	211	2.0 A
REL A	421	2.0 A-
MET	291R	0.0 P

SEM GPA 3.88

WINTER 1988

CIV E	203	3.0 A-
MET	225	3.0 A
MET	331	3.0 A
MET	335	4.0 A
MET	336	3.0 B-
MET	391R	0.5 P

SEM GPA 3.78

SPRING TERM 1988

MET	360	3.0 D
CHEM	152	3.0 A

SEM GPA 2.85

SUMMER TERM 1988

PHIL	110	3.0 B-

SEM GPA 3.40

SUMMARY OF COLLEGE CREDITS

	EARNED	GRADED	POINTS	GPA
TOTAL	99.5	96.3	332.20	3.45
BYU	54.0	53.5	195.80	3.66

13

Orientation Standards, Evaluation, and Assessment

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Is your institution's orientation program in compliance with recognized minimal national standards? Are faculty, staff and students collaboratively involved in the establishment of standards and the evaluation and assessment of the program? How can you demonstrate that you are doing what you say you are doing and that you are doing it well? When and why should programs be evaluated? What are the dangers of not conducting program assessment and evaluation? These are questions that are asked when we consider assessment and evaluation of orientation programs. Although unique situations do exist across institutions, the use of standards can demonstrate a comparability of data while recognizing the unique features of each institution. In this chapter, the authors will discuss the implementation of standards, the importance of assessment and evaluation of orientation programs, and the differences between assessment and evaluation.

Implementation of Standards

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) was formed in 1979, and the initial development of standards was a collaborative effort of 22 professional associations. Currently, there are 20 associations in CAS and standards exist for 18 functional areas. The National Orientation Directors Association has been an active member of CAS since the beginning and Standards and Guidelines for Student Orientation Programs were published in 1986. In the spring of 1986 the chief executive officer of every institution of higher education in the United States received copies of the *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/Development Programs*. In 1988, the *Student Orientation Programs Self-Assessment Guide* was published (Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs, 1988). "The development of the CAS

standards represents one of the greatest achievements of our profession. These materials represent an excellent set of tools to develop, expand, explain, and defend important campus services" (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991, p. 30). The standards provide an appropriate framework for program assessment and evaluation; therefore, we believe that implementation of these standards is imperative.

There are many other reasons why orientation professionals should operationalize the CAS standards.

> More than almost anyone on campus, orientation directors work across division lines to communicate with and involve the entire institution in the implementation of their programs. Often these programs are developed by student affairs staff who do not feel as though they are equal partners in the institutional political structure. As a result, program credibility must be achieved, so that all constituencies within the institution understand, accept, and embrace the value of the orientation function. One way to achieve program credibility is to operationalize the CAS standards. Putting the standards into place can also assist in program planning, staff development, self-study for reaccreditation, budget request justification, educating the campus community, and political maneuverability (Mullendore, 1992, p. 43).

Implementation of the CAS standards requires a functional area review (assessment) that should be conducted by a group that includes students, faculty, staff, and the person(s) responsible for the program. This broad base of involvement is extremely important in order for the implementation process to be an educative effort for other campus constituencies and to increase the objectivity of the assessment. A program director is often too close to the program to assess program components and effectiveness objectively. For the purposes of this chapter, two methods of implementation will be discussed briefly.

Two years after the CAS standards were published, CAS developed and distributed a series of self-assessment guides for each functional area. The guides were developed to help an institution "gain an informed perspective on its strengths and deficiencies and then plan for program improvement" (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1988, p. *iii*). The orientation self-assessment guides provide introductory information relative to the CAS standards, explain the self-assessment process, supply worksheets for the assessment of each standard, delineate the process for a follow-up action plan, and provide a copy of the orientation standards and guidelines. These guides are available from CAS (C/O Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Maryland, College Park, MD) and may be reproduced internally for a self-study.

The self-assessment guides are designed for completion by individuals; therefore, training for those involved in the self-study is critical to this method of implementation. Once all members of the group have completed the process, differences can be identified and discussed until

consensus is reached. Use of this process can be tedious due to the depth of the assessment and the reliance on collecting and documenting supporting evidence. "A key component of the self-assessment guides is the recommendation that a follow-up action plan be developed .... This plan should include areas of excellence, required actions, program enhancement actions, and program action plans" (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991, p. 34).

A second method of operationalizing the CAS standards is the program statement approach, which was developed at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington between the time that the CAS standards were distributed in 1986 and the time that the self-assessment guides were published in 1988. "This approach was developed because there was a tremendous immediate need for campus-wide education, credibility, and political maneuverability within the new student orientation program. The approach was so successful that it was refined and applied throughout all functional areas under the control of the student affairs division" (Bryan & Mullendore, 1991, p. 34).

The strengths of the program statement approach are the reliance on group process and the focus on both standards and guidelines. In this approach, group discussion of the CAS documents provides an opportunity to understand, discuss, and assess (a) each standard and guideline statement, (b) the development of accurate statements reflecting the current status of each component relative to the standards and guidelines, (c) an identification of areas of weakness and/or non compliance; provision of recommendations for program improvement or enhancement, (d) an opportunity to establish an annual review process, and (e) the potential to develop and distribute a report throughout the college or university. Two methods of operationalizing the CAS standards have been briefly presented here. Both approaches require an extensive assessment of the program with appropriate documentation as well as the development of specific recommendations for enhancing or improving programs. Other methods of implementation certainly exist. What is important is that an institution decide upon an approach, conduct a comprehensive self-study, and adopt the CAS standards for the orientation program.

Program Evaluation

> There must be systematic and regular research on and evaluation of the overall institutional student services/development program and the student orientation program to determine whether the educational goals and the needs of students are being met. Although methods of evaluation may vary, they must utilize both quantitative and qualitative measures. Data collected must include responses from students and other significant constituencies. Results of these regular evaluations must be used in revising and improving the program goals and implementation. (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1988, p. 27)

Many models exist for evaluation; the paramount need for evaluation is to determine program effectiveness and efficiency. In fact, as will be seen in the next section, without sufficient evaluation data, program assessment cannot take place. While the CAS standards assume a global positive value in the establishment of all student affairs programs, the local value of one program over another is often a very pragmatic decision involving the allocation of resources. Without evaluation a program is left to stand on the perceived merits or deficiencies held by a local audience. In an era of declining resources this is a very precipitous location.

Do the services, programs, and activities offered during orientation meet assessed and perceived student needs? Are the students who participate in orientation satisfied with these services, programs, and activities? What do the students consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the institution's orientation program? Are the needs of parents and/or other constituencies being addressed appropriately? These are the types of questions that must be answered if an orientation program is to be evaluated effectively. "No matter how carefully planned and executed, programs that freshmen do not consider beneficial are not effective" (Perigo & Upcraft, 1989, p. 93). In this chapter a framework for evaluation will be developed and will address the following: a) What and who should be evaluated? b) Who should evaluate? c) What evaluation methods should be used? d) When should evaluation occur? e) Who should receive the results of orientation evaluations?

What and Who Should Be Evaluated?

The warmth, friendliness, and helpfulness of staff and faculty are judged in the many interactions they have with new students. From the time new students and their families arrive on campus for orientation they form lasting opinions and perhaps retention decisions about the institution.

The answer to this question is simple . . . everything and everybody should be evaluated. Orientation, more than probably any other single program, involves virtually every department within the institution. Campus facilities are open to inspection and judgements are made about the institution whether or not new students are asked. The warmth, friendliness, and helpfulness of staff and faculty are judged in the many interactions they have with new students. From the time new students and their families arrive on campus for orientation, they form lasting opinions and perhaps retention decisions about the institution. Program evaluations should reflect these many judgements; therefore, questions about campus facilities, the grounds, the faculty and staff should be asked. For overnight programs the adequacy of the residence hall rooms should be addressed; after all, these students stay in their future homes during orientation. The issue of food is important also, especially because negative evaluations during one session can allow for adjustments for future sessions.

Regarding the orientation program, each component and activity should be evaluated, including the quality of interaction with the academic advisor and whether or not the schedule of classes received was satisfactory. The timing of the program (early summer, mid-summer, or fall)

should be evaluated as well as program length. Evaluations of the orientation staff are critical. Are the orientation leaders and the professional and clerical staff perceived to be friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable? Aside from the program itself, other areas of evaluation are important to the success of orientation. The orientation leader selection process should be evaluated by successful and unsuccessful candidates. The orientation leader training program certainly merits evaluation. Were the leaders a close unit, a team? Were they adequately informed about the history, facilities, programs, and services of the institution? Did the training program occur at appropriate times? The orientation leaders must be evaluated by the program director, and the director should be evaluated by student orientation leaders.

Who Should Evaluate?

The question of who should conduct the evaluation was partially answered above, but some elaboration is necessary. First, and most important, the participants in orientation (students, and where appropriate, parents) must be given the opportunity and be strongly encouraged to evaluate the program, facilities, and the staff. As part of that process an opportunity exists for the institution to gather a profile of those who attend the program while determining levels of satisfaction with the programs, activities, and services. Collection of demographic data (while protecting anonymity) should be a part of the evaluation process. Information should be obtained regarding gender, race/ethnicity, age, enrollment status (full-time or part-time), and educational plans (for example, graduate in four to five years, transfer, or pursue graduate study). For voluntary programs, the institution should determine whether or not attendees represent a profile of all entering students.

In addition to program participants, those who are involved in the program should be provided an opportunity to evaluate orientation. Student affairs staff, other institutional staff, faculty advisors, and others should evaluate the program either formally and informally. Methods of evaluation will be discussed in the next section.

What Evaluation Methods Should Be Used?

Program evaluations by participants can occur in a variety of ways, and evaluation forms can differ considerably from institution to institution. "An evaluation instrument should be constructed to provide the program director with immediate feedback, thereby identifying problems as they occur. The instrument also must provide a comprehensive feedback summary to everyone involved in the program planning and delivery. This feedback not only promotes continuous program development but can also enhance staff morale and cooperation" (Nadler, 1992, p. 39). There are two types of evaluative data to gather: quantitative and qualitative. In developing an evaluative instrument, keep in mind that some of the information needed will be demographic or quantitative data such as age, ethnicity, sex, intended major, residence, employment data, and financial aid. Other information will be related to the goals of the

program or the goals of the participants, which is qualitative data. Further quantitative and qualitative data can be gathered about student satisfaction with the programs, activities, staff interaction, or services offered. These evaluations may be paper and pencil items with responses established in a Likert rating scale, open-ended questions, formal interview and feedback sessions, or informal interview and feedback sessions. When developing an evaluation, be sure to "pilot test" the instrument. Questions of reliability and validity need to be addressed before administering an evaluation to determine if the evaluation provides a true and consistent measurement of a component of the program. If you choose to use the interview, focus group, or other responsive method, interviewers must be trained to be consistent in how they present and record information from program participants.

Choosing a responsive method of data collection (qualitative) can often enhance a rather factual approach to evaluation and assessment. It should be used in combination with quantitative data, however, and not as the single approach to evaluation. The structured interview, done individually or as a part of a focus group is an interview in which "the questions have been formulated ahead of time, and the respondent is expected to answer in terms of the interviewer's framework and definition of the problem" (Guba & Lincoln, 1983, p. 155). The unstructured interview is based on the "respondent's reaction to the broad issue raised by the inquirer" (Guba & Lincoln, 1983, p. 156). A program-specific evaluation, such as an orientation program, would more than likely use the more structured approach. The benefit of the interview method is that it provides the opportunity for non-standard feedback, and the trained interviewer is keenly aware of the opportunity to record these data.

While the interview is a more common method of gathering qualitative data, the orientation program director should never overlook the obvious. Simple observation and nonverbal communication are important measures of qualitative data. The orientation professional should be attentive to feedback from staff and students participating in the program. For example, participants who walk away from the program or complete the program in a nonparticipative or hostile manner are giving valuable feedback.

In preparation for this chapter, several current leaders in the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) were asked to describe their current methods of evaluation and to share with the authors copies of evaluation instruments being used. Eighteen orientation professionals graciously responded to this request. All but one respondent provides an opportunity for a written evaluation of the orientation program upon completion of the program. The evaluation forms vary considerably; however, computer-scored Likert scale responses are commonly used. Space is provided for open-ended comments on these forms. Some institutions prefer to ask directed questions that require written responses regarding specific program components and activities. Those who use the computer-scored forms enjoy immediate feedback, and the ability to adjust problem areas between orientation sessions. One institution

provides the opportunity for students to use computers at check-out to evaluate the program. The staff can get evaluative feedback that day!

Although written evaluation at the end of a program is by far the most common method used to ascertain levels of participant satisfaction, other forms of evaluation also occur often as follow-up after a period of time has passed. Some institutions conduct phone interviews during the first semester to determine how the student is doing, what concerns or questions the student may have, and in retrospect whether or not the orientation experience was helpful. Some institutions use written surveys while others use personal interviews with the program director. A new type of follow-up is emerging due to the popularity of the freshman seminar; that is, the use of focus groups with students chosen from the class to talk as a group about the pre-term orientation. The use of follow-up surveys and research on new student adjustment and retention will be addressed in the area of assessment later in this chapter.

In addition to students who participate in orientation programs, several other constituencies also should be given the opportunity to evaluate the orientation program. From the responses to the survey of NODA leaders, it is apparent that most program directors hold formal meetings with various constituent groups to gain feedback and input regarding the program organization and effectiveness. However, a written evaluation instrument should also supplement formal or informal discussions.

When Should Evaluation Occur?

Ideally, evaluation occurs not only in a variety of ways but also at various times. In the survey of NODA leaders, 17 out of 18 respondents indicated that they encourage participants to evaluate the program at the conclusion of the event. Some institutions place evaluation forms in participant packets which are handed out at check-in. Participants are encouraged to fill out and leave the forms in a box or mail them back after returning home. In order to encourage participants to respond, some institutions provide incentives such as bookstore gift certificates, while other institutions provide time at the close of the program for evaluation to become part of the check-out process. In one institution students who stay in the residence hall (over 90% of the participants) pay a $10.00 key deposit at check-in; then they are able to return the key and receive a refund after completing a program evaluation form. Response rates are excellent!!

Evaluating orientation immediately upon completion of the program is extremely helpful in getting information that may assist staff in making adjustments for future sessions and in acknowledging a job well done. Care should be exercised in interpreting the results, however, since the long-term impact of the program cannot yet be determined. In order to determine the effectiveness of orientation more adequately, research and/or evaluation efforts during and after the first semester are recommended. In the

Evaluating orientation immediately upon completion of the program is extremely helpful in getting information that may assist staff in making adjustments for future sessions and in acknowledging a job well done.

previous section a few types of first-semester evaluations were mentioned. These follow-up evaluations can occur at any time but the evaluator should carefully consider the issue of timing. What do you want to gain from the evaluation? Do you want to be able to give information and assistance as well as gain information?

The timing of the process of evaluation is somewhat driven by the goals. For example, it is not practical to attempt to measure the retention rate of new students immediately following the orientation effort. At the same time, it would not be practical to measure the awareness of non-classroom activities two years after an orientation. With each goal a specific timetable for measurement needs to be established. Most can be measured immediately following the orientation, while others require evaluation at longer intervals (i.e., retention is usually measured from freshman to sophomore year).

Evaluation of program components is generally conducted on an annual basis. The program components for a parent or transfer orientation may vary significantly from those of the freshman program. Therefore, each program needs a separate evaluation instrument. Many orientation professionals find that an annual review of the program evaluations prior to the planning of the next year's effort is necessary and helpful.

The evaluation of all of the resources used in orientation may occur at a variety of times; for example, the evaluation of human resources may be an ongoing process with a formative evaluation conducted at the conclusion of the work period. For some staff members this evaluation may become part of an annual review of their work, but usually student staff members are evaluated upon completion of their specific responsibilities. Facility evaluation, usually conducted on an annual basis, should be established as a part of the planning cycle when staff are considering the size of the audience and the type of program(s) offered. Fiscal resource evaluation is often tied into the institutional budgeting process. If fiscal resources are allocated on an annual basis, the cycle for evaluation of fiscal resources should also occur on an annual basis.

Orientation staff should consider doing participant follow-up evaluations either at the middle or end of the first semester. At both of these times, new students should have had an opportunity to attend classes, take tests, make friends, join organizations, use campus services, and participate in campus activities. They should be able to remember orientation and relate that experience to their current level of comfort with and knowledge about the institution. Program evaluations at these times can and should be qualitative in nature, including personal interviews or focus groups.

Distribution of Evaluation Reports

Whether participants evaluate the orientation at check-out upon completion of the program or through a focus group during the first semester, it is critical that the results be compiled in a concise format for annual

reports, future planning, as well as dissemination within and perhaps beyond the institution. Evaluation reports are useless if they merely gather dust on shelves; to be effective, reports must be distributed and read.

Copies of evaluation reports, including quantitative data and participant comments, should be made available to all professional and support staff who are significantly involved in implementing the program. Because orientation involves so many constituencies within the institution, there may be a large number of people in this category. Those involved in the program are quite likely to read the material provided. Student staff should have access to reports and be encouraged to review them. All orientation advisory committee members (if applicable) should be given copies, and the report should be discussed in-depth with this group. Deans, vice presidents, and presidents should also receive these reports. Follow-up meetings scheduled with upper-level administrators provide a forum to discuss the program, its success, and its needs. One way to gain the essential support of deans, vice-presidents and presidents is to use the sharing of evaluative data as a springboard for discussion. It may be appropriate for the members of the Student Affairs Committee (or other applicable group) of the Board of Trustees to receive copies of the report for discussion at their next committee meeting. In short, everyone involved in the program and upper-level administrators should be given copies of the orientation evaluation report, and discussions should be sought to follow up the distribution. In this section, discussion has focused on the area of program evaluation. The next section will provide a glimpse of the area of assessment.

Assessment

What is the value of the orientation effort? What value does it have for the participants, and what value does it have to the institution? Just as the program is evaluated in an ongoing manner, so should assessment activities occur. In order to answer the above questions, the orientation professional will need to know (a) which student development model is used as a standard within the student affairs division at the institution, (b) what are the goals of the student affairs division, and (c) how do these goals relate to the institutional mission.

In an article on standards and outcomes assessment, Winston and Moore (1991) advocate using the Kurt Lewin (1951) model of person-environment interaction. Briefly, this model indicates that $B=f(PE)$, where behavior (B) is a function (f) of person (P) and environment (E) interaction. This model is well suited to orientation efforts where the emphasis is on student development (P) and how behavior is affected by the new environment (E) of orientation and higher education.

Terenzini (1989) has identified the basic components of a student development model which focuses on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and behavior. While many other models exist, the components remain similar. Of course, orientation professionals must frame assessment efforts

within the parameters of the accepted model on their campuses. While students come to a campus with a broad variety of developmental areas as noted in any student development model, what impact, if any, does participation in an orientation effort have on this development? In order to answer this question, the evaluation effort, as pointed out earlier, must contain some baseline achievement as well as demographic data in addition to program specific information. This information will assist in developing criteria for program assessment efforts.

Reviewing the goals of the institutional mission must precede assessment of an orientation program. Once the institutional mission and goals of the division in which the orientation program is located are reviewed, it will be necessary to review the goals of the orientation effort. *CAS Standards and Guidelines* (1988) has outlined 18 goals for orientation programs. While these goals are beneficial in comparing various orientation programs, they may need some modification or localization in order to be consistent with the mission and goals of a specific institution. For example, one of the CAS goals is to assist students in understanding the mission of the institution. There may be graduates of some institutions who would have difficulty in demonstrating this knowledge. The assessment instrument should clearly determine the level at which participants meet this goal.

One very visible way to demonstrate the importance of orientation is to determine the impact of orientation on student retention.

Program assessment is relative. The characteristics of the student body, the mission of the institution, and the goals of the program are the bases for an assessment of the orientation effort. How they are assessed is as important in assessment as in evaluation. In order for a comprehensive assessment to be made, it will be necessary for all constituent bodies involved to be a part of the assessment effort. This means that admissions, registrar, advisement, housing, and other concerned areas need to be involved in conducting the assessment. Recommendations from this group should be forwarded to the appropriate decision-making body on the campus. Feedback and discussion concerning the nature of the program should take place during formal assessment and should focus on developing or shaping a program that meets the needs of the students and institution. By establishing a team to formulate the assessment, staff can educate team members regarding the impact an orientation program can have, and through this process assessment can have the effect of broadening the base of support. In an era of competition for restricted resources this support can be very beneficial. Programs that can demonstrate a positive impact on student development and that are consistent with the goals of the division and mission of the institution will be viewed as valuable.

One very visible way to demonstrate the importance of orientation is to determine the impact of orientation on student retention. "Programs that ease the transition from high school and work to higher education or from one institution to another are essential in successful enrollment management programs. The orientation of students - academically, socially,

geographically, institutionally - is key to student success" (Hossler & Bean, 1990). In a national study conducted by the American College Testing Program and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, orientation was ranked as the third most effective retention activity (Beal & Noel, 1980). In another study, the combination of comprehensive orientation and advising activities appeared to have a positive effect on student retention to graduation (Forrest, 1982).

Currently, many studies of student persistence cite Tinto's (1987) model of social and academic integration. Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfle (1986) tested the "influence of an institutional intervention on student persistence/withdrawal behavior within the framework of Tinto's model. The intervention was a precollege orientation program designed both to increase the student's knowledge of the institution and its traditions, and to facilitate his or her integration into the institution's social and academic systems" (p. 156). This longitudinal study found that attendance at orientation had a significant direct effect on the variables "social integration" and "institutional commitment". Interestingly, these two variables "had the largest direct effects on freshman year persistence of all variables in the model" (Pascarella, Terenzini, & Wolfle, 1986, p. 169). As a result, the impact of the orientation experience was primarily indirect but substantial. Replication of this type of study on your campus may be a powerful assessment activity.

When and how often should a formal assessment occur? If you have not already implemented the CAS standards on your campus, the beginning of this process would be to conduct a functional area review. This review would allow staff to assess compliance with minimally established national standards as well as review the value of the orientation effort for the institution and the students. Once all program areas have been reviewed and assessed, the question of periodic review depends on the nature of the students and institutional requirements. Has the student body changed? Has the mission or scope of the institution evolved or changed over time? While it may be advisable to conduct annual reviews of evaluation data along with annual assessments, this may not always be practical. However, some form of ongoing assessment activity is necessary and will be expected in the future from regional accrediting organizations.

The inability to demonstrate the relative value of an orientation program through periodic assessment will leave the program open to criticism and question. Is this program really necessary and can the institution afford it? These questions can only be answered through evaluation and assessment. A comprehensive evaluation and assessment program will allow you to answer questions before they arise and approach program development in a proactive manner.

Concluding Remarks

What are the intended outcomes of an orientation effort? How will they be measured against other program efforts and limited resources? Are

you doing the right thing (effectiveness), and are you doing something right (efficiency)? Orientation professionals must be prepared to address these questions in response to institutional and student needs. To be successful, staff must have at their disposal a comprehensive set of evaluative data which can demonstrate the impact of the program on the participants and the institution. Orientation professionals must be able to determine which areas of evaluation in the CAS standards have priority at their own institutions. Meeting the goals of the institution while contributing to the development of students will help increase the priority of the orientation program.

The establishment of a comprehensive evaluation and assessment tool for orientation programs is one of the CAS standards. Yet developing such a tool is often overlooked or done on an "as needed" basis to support justifications for program modification. A comprehensive approach to this tool would call for an ongoing commitment to evaluation and assessment from across many areas of the institution. This involvement helps to address the need for continuity over a period of time in a program where personnel changes are rapid and routine and helps to remove any perceived bias that may be present if only limited personnel are involved in the plan.

The comprehensive evaluation and assessment plan would utilize periodic reviews for specific areas and an overall review on an annual basis. Summative statements can be made at four to six year intervals. The comprehensive assessment plan can also be reviewed on an annual basis with recommendations forwarded as a part of the assessment of all programs at the institution.

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14

Perspectives on the Future of Orientation

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The Importance of Collegiate Orientation

The campuses of the 90s are very different kinds of campuses. They are increasingly complex and present major challenges and exciting opportunities for students, faculty, and administrators. Designing effective transitions for students through orientation is one of the most important challenges facing American campuses. This monograph is dedicated to the proposition that effective collegiate orientation is indispensable to insuring greater success of America's college students for the following reasons:

1. Getting off to a good start during the first few weeks of college is essential to student success. There is overwhelming evidence that new students who participate in orientation are more likely to earn higher grades and graduate than those who do not participate.

2. Orientation can serve as a critical step of how to make the most out of the student's investment of hopes, dreams, time, energy, and financial resources in the college experience.

3. Progressive orientation programs are comprehensive, extended transitional programs that set a serious academic tone. Orientation not only helps new students make new friends, learn their way around campus, but also increases their comfort level, and reduces their anxiety. Orientation also provides necessary information, testing, advisement, class scheduling, initial registration, and often student success sessions on such issues as wellness, safety, civility, diversity, student responsibilities, expectations, and the role of the family.

4. Orientation provides most new students with important opportunities to develop relationships with college faculty which are important ingredients in college success.

5. An effective orientation provides an initial opportunity for the new student to begin to develop that all important relationship with the academic advisor, who in many cases will be a faculty member.

6. Orientation provides new students with important academic information as well as a structural framework for connecting admissions to the testing, advising, and registration functions through a concept of extended enrollment management.

7. Another dimension of college success is the participation and orientation of the new student and his/her extended family which increases the probability of a partnership of support for the new student.

8. Orientation is a mirror of what the campus represents, as well as what the institution has to offer. It is an opportunity for the institution to introduce to the students the climate of the campus, the unique aspects of the campus culture and norms, and help shape the students' expectations of what lies ahead for them.

9. Orientation provides an opportunity to connect the admissions process to the environment process, thus solidifying the concept of extended enrollment management and increasing the likelihood that new students will matriculate at the institution.

10. Simultaneously, orientation shapes the students' expectations of the particular institution and, hopefully, gives them a more realistic expectation of what lies ahead.

11. Orientation provides what is perhaps the most ideal vehicle for an all important partnership between faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and students.

Orientation Isn't the Way It Used to Be

Memories of orientation differ depending upon the time, location, size, and type of educational institution, and the role that one played while at the college or university (as a student, family member, educator, or administrator). Today, orientation programs are or should be comprehensive, extended transitional programs that set a serious academic tone for students of all ages, lifestyles, interests, academic backgrounds, and walks of life.

It is apparent that orientation has become one of the most dynamic, rapidly changing components of the student's college experience. To put

this in perspective, the authors easily and vividly recall college orientation, vintage 60s style. Their experience was typical of that of many senior administrators who now run America's colleges and universities and who, unfortunately, thus have little contact with the highly professional and comprehensive orientation programs of the 90s In contrast, just three decades ago, the authors recall that college was primarily an experience for the white, male, Christian, middle class student. Orientation often reflected the sexist and racist assumptions of the times. On many campuses, separate orientation sessions were held for men and women, and little if anything unique was offered for the few minority students on American campuses.

just three decades ago, the authors recall that college was primarily an experience for the white, male, Christian, middle class. Orientation often reflected the sexist and racist assumptions of the times.

For example, John Gardner recalls attending a nominally private and non-sectarian college in which the first orientation session was held in the sanctuary of the local Baptist church. Imagine the disillusionment of the Jewish students when they were introduced to college in the sanctuary of a Christian church, after being recruited to a college which was described in its recruitment literature as private and non-sectarian. Even then, students rapidly learned whether or not institutions were going to deliver what they promised.

Further, orientation programs often reflected a kind of academic social Darwinism wherein only the fittest would and should survive. Hence, generations of college students were told by their college presidents to "look to the left and look to the right and the two students you just looked at won't be there four years later when you graduate!" The message was clear: "It is our job to 'weed out' the many of you who can't cut it, rather than help you achieve your goals."

Also, orientation programs were almost completely social with little academic content and absolutely no contact with faculty. There was also little contact with student affairs professionals, and when there was, it was for the purpose of making students aware of the prescriptive rules of conduct designed to promote proper morality and civility, based on the concept of *in loco parentis*, and how those rules would be rigorously enforced.

In the orientation programs of that era, there was certainly no concept of a continuing or extended orientation program beyond the beginning of classes. There were very few, if any freshman seminars/orientation courses, and when they did exist, they were focused on "adjustment to college" themes with little or no academic content or rigor.

The moral of the story: It may be very difficult for many of today's college administrators and faculty, because of their own experiences in the fifties, sixties, or seventies, to have an awareness of the relationship of orientation to academic success, or to understand what an effective, progressive orientation program should be.

So How Has Orientation Changed Over Three Decades?

Orientation has changed so much on many campuses over the past three decades, its transformation might make it unrecognizable to a former participant. Orientation programming must address a changing student population since colleges and universities are experiencing tremendous growth in numbers of women, ethnic minorities, adult students, and diverse student groups. As students change, so must the program that orients them to the life of the campus. For example:

1. Orientation is now conducted by a combination of student affairs professionals, academic affairs administrators, faculty, and outstanding student peer leaders. The student personnel professional component of that leadership team usually exercises primary responsibility for orientation.

2. The demographic characteristics of those who participate in collegiate orientation programs are profoundly more diverse by race, ethnicity, age, gender, and other factors which may influence college success. Each group presents an unique set of needs and challenges for the institution.

3. Orientation is no longer designed intentionally to reflect sexist and racist assumptions. Rather, it now assumes that all students want to participate equally in the American dream of higher education and have equal access to first-year college opportunities. Special efforts are now made in many college orientation programs to provide focused supplementary orientation sessions and programs for under-represented students.

4. No longer are college orientation programs the platforms for making negative predictions (with pride) about the pending failures of students. To the contrary, orientation is used as a vehicle to promote positive outcomes for successful student learning.

5. At many colleges, orientation is now a required experience which takes place before students arrive for the fall term. Students who do not participate cannot be advised and registered through the normal channels.

6. On nearly two-thirds of college campuses today, orientation is now extended beyond the first few days to the first six weeks and/or the entire first semester/year by offering freshman seminar/freshman orientation courses. There is substantial evidence compiled by the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, that new students who successfully complete these courses are more likely to earn higher grades, graduate, and feel more involved than those who do not enroll (Barefoot, 1993; Fidler, 1991).

7. Orientation is a program that on many campuses is offered to a number of highly segmented, targeted, differentiated populations including family members and transfer students.

8. Orientation is based on sound student developmental models and extensive empirically based research, much of which is described in this monograph.

9. Orientation is now a highly sophisticated component of the concept of enrollment management which links admissions to orientation to advising to registration to matriculation to actually starting and continuing the collegiate first term.

10. Orientation is a program that is supported by the National Orientation Directors Association, a strong, viable professional association which provides information and support for institutional orientation services and programs, as well as orientation staff.

11. *The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for Student Services/Development Programs* provide nationally endorsed criteria to assist institutions to develop and assess effective orientation programs.

Orientation of Today and Tomorrow: A Comprehensive Program

While the authors believe that the changing face of collegiate orientation may have a few surprises in store, some changes are certain.

1. On some campuses, orientation is provided on a no-cost basis to entering students and members of their families. However, on many other campuses, orientation is provided on a fee basis. But even in those instances, it is regarded as a "best bargain." What consumer would not be willing to invest relatively few dollars, in effect, to purchase a warranty or owner's manual to learn how to make the most of this tremendously expensive investment called a college education? Due to the financial pressures at public and private institutions alike, it seems likely that institutions will pass more of the cost of orientation, like all other costs, on to program participants in order to become more and more self-supporting.

2. More institutions will require orientation of all new students. The authors believe and hope this trend will ultimately permeate even the community colleges.

3. There will be even greater opportunities for student to student contact through the use of student orientation leaders, in part because they are cost effective *and* effective in the "people-to-people" arena. More importantly, they will be used more extensively because of the realization that they may have a more

powerful influence on new student decision making and role modeling than the professional educators also involved in orientation.

4. More institutions will combine orientation with freshman seminar courses and with academic advising by linking advising to the freshman seminar. In these situations, the freshman seminar instructor could also serve as the academic advisor for students in the seminar class.

5. Assessment of orientation programs will continue, increase, and will lead to further changes and refinements in orientation approaches. Effective programs will be evaluated based on the documented evidence of the needs of the student and the institution. The era of "thinking and feeling" what is right to do for the student will be replaced by local assessment data, student profile information, and research data based on personal, academic, and cultural findings.

6. Orientation programs possibly may be incorporated into larger institutional structures which span institutional boundaries such as undergraduate instruction and support programs, enrollment management divisions, advising centers, and university or general colleges. Such restructuring may have the consequence of moving many orientation programs further afield from traditional student affairs divisions in which they may have originated. As a result, the orientation program of the future will be an integral part of the larger picture of setting a serious academic tone for the student in terms of expectations, standards, and behaviors.

7. Due to the long-term consequences of the financial crisis of contemporary higher education and the disproportionate reductions being experienced in student affairs staff, educators can expect less mobility of orientation staff. As a result, the status of orientation professionals, ironically, may increase because more orientation professionals will remain in those positions longer and their seniority will increase. Simultaneously, orientation positions increasingly will be combined with other important university student support service functions such as advising, testing, and enrollment management, as well as academic affairs positions in undergraduate instruction and undergraduate university colleges.

What Have We Learned From This Monograph

The orientation program is a mirror of what the campus represents, as well as what the institution has to offer. The refinement of orientation programming has been significantly influenced by student development theory, longitudinal research, practice, changing student demographics, assessment data, institutional needs, and mandated legislation.

First, by the year 2000, there will be dramatic and continuing changes in the characteristics of students attending postsecondary institutions. One in three will be nonwhite. Students will be more diverse by race, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, and national origin. They will be more likely to enroll part-time, take more than four years to graduate, and commute. They will also likely have a much wider range of academic abilities, academic preparation, personal health and wellness, family support and stability, and learning styles.

Second, colleges and universities will shift from planning enrollments to *managing* enrollments, due to limited resources, a declining pool of potential applicants, earlier admissions deadlines, enrollment limits, and an increased commitment to meeting the changing needs of new students.

Third, orientation programs will have to be more responsive to external mandates and include such mandates in orientation programs, services, and publications. These include reporting campus crime statistics and meeting the requirements of various laws including the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, and other civil rights legislation.

Fourth, orientation programs must reflect institutional mission and goals and be funded adequately through more institutional resources and creative funding mechanisms such as fees, supplemental grants, and parental/family support.

Fifth, orientation programs must show that they have an impact on students. That is, there must be assessment data that defines needs, informs programs, and shows an impact on such student outcomes as academic achievement, matriculation to graduation, and personal/social development.

Sixth, more involvement of faculty in orientation programs, and more partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs will continue to evolve as the whole institution communicates to new students what is expected of them, as well as what is required of them to succeed. The administrative control of this partnership will move away from a separate "stand alone" program/office toward a focus on a "first-year program" which integrates students' in-class and out-of-class experiences.

Seventh, access will continue to be an issue, and orientation will be extended not only beyond matriculation, but before matriculation as well. For example, "summer bridge" programs, institutes for "at-risk" students, and "headstart" programs will continue to be vital links to increasing access to higher education.

Finally, there will be more attention paid to students attending two-year colleges, not only in terms of orientation programs to help students make a successful transition to college, but also to help them transfer to four-year institutions. Transfer centers similar to the California model will

continue to emerge, requiring changes in academic practices, inter-institutional faculty collaboration, curriculum development, and an ongoing commitment to support the adjustment and success of students who transfer.

Recommendations

This monograph has reviewed the many ways in which orientation professionals are currently designing successful transition experiences for new students. As we consider the challenges that face higher education in future years, we offer the following recommendations to those on the "front line" of orientation programs and to institutional policy makers whose decisions will determine the direction and effectiveness of future orientation programming.

1. Orientation programs need to move away from the stereotypical "fun and games" approach which is based primarily on a social emphasis. They need to develop a more serious academic tone and to stress that succeeding in college and making the most of an investment of consumer dollars is serious business indeed. The clear trend in orientation course work is to move away from addressing primarily social, personal adaptation issues to a much greater emphasis on academic orientation and introduction to the college experience. We commend and encourage this trend.

2. Although orientation programs need to continue acknowledging the differences of students, they need to focus especially and primarily on what students have in common. This is to say that while we commend the approach of many universities to target unique sub-populations for special orientation, nevertheless, orientation should continue to be one of those few common core elements which students encounter to build a basis for community, bringing together all students in a common undertaking (i.e., the components of a common culture).

3. Orientation needs to move from an optional to a required status in all universities. This needs to be done in the sector where orientation is least likely to be required: community colleges.

4. Ideally, orientation needs to be incorporated into all types of freshman seminars, and/or summer bridge programs so as to increase the extent of student participation in extended orientation, as well as increase the involvement on the part of faculty.

5. Colleges and universities need to communicate more directly with family members, or extended family members, to encourage the participation of their new students to take an active part in orientation. Family members should be viewed and treated as an important support system for the student, especially during the first-year experience.

6. Faculty need to strongly encourage their student advisees to participate in the optional, extended orientation activities that are commonplace on campuses during the first few days, the first few weeks, or throughout the first year of the college experience.

7. Institutions need to provide orientation for the transfer student as part of the larger effort to create a more "friendly" transfer student campus culture. Academic and student services units should work closely together to address transfer and support service articulation issues. For example, institutions which now offer "freshman" seminars, should reconstitute those as "new student" seminars open to transfer students. In addition, transfer centers could provide support and programming on an extended basis.

8. Periodically, an independent assessment should be made of the effectiveness of orientation programming by someone who is not connected with the administration of the orientation program under review. Such an assessment, based on outcome measures such as academic achievement, retention, personal development, and other variables, will provide a basis for improving orientation, as well as build greater credibility among the collegiate community for orientation.

9. This monograph has recognized that contemporary orientation work is based on sound theoretical assumptions. These theoretical principles, however, need to be more widely shared with the academic members of the community. Therefore, orientation professionals need to communicate the rationale and the literature base which influence their thinking with members of the academic community, especially the faculty. For example, if the campus offers a freshman seminar, one of the ideal contexts in which to do this would be in freshman seminar instructor training.

10. Obviously, all the diverse students' needs for orientation cannot be addressed after they arrive. Like many other aspects of improving the freshman year experience, we need to push orientation back further and further into the secondary school sector. The College/School Partnership Movement as orchestrated by the American Association for Higher Education has made tremendous strides to increase the level of high school student motivation and preparedness for the ultimate college experience. We recommend that colleges and universities work more carefully with their feeder high schools to extend collegiate orientation back into the high school years, at the very least, during the senior year of high school. Perhaps the most effective way to do this would be to offer a concurrent college orientation course for high school seniors which would carry college level credit. Admittedly, certain aspects of collegiate

orientation cannot be accomplished until students actually arrive on a college campus. However, many issues can be dealt with prior to the first term such as the acquisition of certain study skills.

11. Distance education will be an important factor in the years to come. While colleges inevitably will use more and more technology in accomplishing orientation (e.g., video presentations, interactive media, computer assisted registration), it must never be forgotten that the most powerful components of orientation are the "high touch" elements which can only be provided by direct human contact.

12. Orientation needs to be regarded by senior campus policy makers as a total campus responsibility requiring a total campus commitment. It also needs to be viewed as perhaps the best partnership vehicle between academic administrators, faculty, student affairs administrators, and student leaders. Every campus should have a senior level standing committee that serves as an advisory group to the orientation program.

13. Given the tremendous importance of orientation in creating student satisfaction and enhancing student retention, institutions should *not* make the position of orientation director an entry level position. This merely perpetuates the historic American practice of conferring low status on those educators who deal primarily with new students. There have been enormous strides made in the orientation profession over the past two decades to increase the status and seniority of orientation professionals. We commend this trend and encourage every post-secondary institution have at least one individual active in the National Orientation Directors Association in order to assist in the further professionalization of the campus' orientation programming.

14. Senior institutional leaders should be highly visible as participants in orientation, (i.e., the president, the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, senior faculty). They should seize the opportunity to communicate the institutional message to new students of what is expected, as well as required of the student in terms of roles, responsibilities, and outcomes.

15. Given the tremendous temptation in this era of downsizing by reducing student services across the board, the authors of this monograph believe it is absolutely imperative not to reduce efforts at a comprehensive student orientation. Given the unique nature of the new students who are reaching campuses in increasing numbers, they need and deserve a professional college orientation more than ever. We believe that there is a moral imperative to provide the most thorough and effective

orientation possible to all students in order to strengthen the students' commitment to learning and increase the probability of their success.

16. The identification, selection, and training of faculty members to participate in orientation is very important. They play a key role in the introduction of the campus to the student, just as they do in the student satisfaction level with the institution. Faculty need to be actively involved in the orientation program. They need to know the profile of the new student, as well as the academic regulations and requirements of the institution.

17. Orientation programs will continue to utilize student-to-student contact as an effective delivery system. Students will be utilized in greater numbers as mentoring and peer advising initiatives become more commonplace. The composition of the student staff (paid or volunteer) must reflect the demographics of the student population in order for the students effectively to "reach" diverse student populations and sub-groups.

Accepting the Challenge

This monograph cites example after example of the exciting challenges and opportunities that face institutions of higher education through the year 2000. We need to work with students to create a campus environment that promotes human and cultural civility, treats members of the university community equally yet allows for their differences, and creates a campus environment that encourages students to assume responsibility for their learning *and* personal development. A comprehensive, extended orientation program can and should set the tone for the campus and provide a medium to address these issues.

Based on the significant accumulation of evidence that a freshman orientation course enhances the probability of student retention, graduation, use of student services, involvement in co-curricular activities, and other positive outcomes, we recommend that every post-secondary institution have some form of continuing orientation for academic credit. At the very least, institutions which currently do not provide such an opportunity for their students should explore the feasibility of adding such an opportunity to their curriculum by undertaking a study of the extent, scope, and outcomes of freshman orientation courses in American higher education.

The authors of this monograph believe that the goal of every educational institution should be to elicit 100% participation of students in their orientation programs to assist in new student transition. *We endorse the premise that every American college student should have as a basic right the opportunity to a thorough, effective orientation. We simultaneously believe that one very effective method of providing such an orientation can be through a degree-applicable, credit-bearing college course. We encourage every institution of higher education to accept this challenge as an institutional goal.*

As the authors reflect on the exciting changes which have taken place in orientation programming over the course of their lives as both undergraduate students and as educators in higher education, we conclude this chapter with optimism that the sophistication and professionalism of collegiate orientation can, must, and will only continue. We look forward to working with our readership in insuring this effort which is so important to the national interest of the United States. Clearly, we all have a stake in getting students off to a good start in American higher education.

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Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS): Standards and Guidelines for Student Orientation Programs

Part 1: Mission

The institution and its student orientation program must develop, review, and disseminate regularly their own specific goals for student services/development, which must be consistent with the nature and goals of the institution and with the standards in this document.

The mission of student orientation must be to provide for continuing services and assistance that will:

- **aid new students in their transition to the institution;**
- **expose new students to the broad educational opportunities of the institution; and**
- **integrate new students into the life of the institution.**

A structured orientation process based on stated goals and objectives should be provided. This process should serve both the student and the institution. The structured entry process aids students in understanding the nature and purpose of the institution and their relationship to the academic environment. Self growth and learning may occur as students are assisted in understanding their own relationship to the intellectual, social, and cultural climate of the institution.

An orientation process should be available to all students new to the institution. Freshmen, transfers, and graduate students should be served as major population groups with specific attention given to the special needs of sub-groups (e.g., international students).

The immediate support groups of students (e.g., parents, guardians, spouses, children) play an important role in the life of each student, and should be provided with information and orientation experiences as appropriate.

Certain goals should be applicable, regardless of the size or purpose of the institution, including commitments to:

- assist students in understanding the purpose of higher education;
- assist students in understanding the mission of the specific institution;
- assist students in determining their purpose in attending the institution and developing positive relationships with faculty, staff, peers, and other individuals in the community;
- help students understand the institution's expectations of them;
- provide information about and opportunities for self-assessment;
- identify costs in attending the institution, both in terms of dollars and personal commitment;
- improve the retention rate of new students;
- provide an atmosphere and sufficient information to enable students to make reasoned and well-informed choices;
- provide information concerning academic policies, procedures, requirements, and programs;
- promote an awareness of nonclassroom opportunities;
- provide referrals to qualified counselors and advisors;
- explain the processes for class scheduling and registration and provide trained supportive assistance to accomplish these tasks;
- develop familiarity with the physical surroundings;
- provide information and exposure to available institutional services;
- help students identify and evaluate housing and commuting options;
- create an atmosphere that minimizes anxiety, promotes positive attitudes, and stimulates an excitement for learning;
- provide appropriate information on personal safety and security; and
- provide opportunities for new students to discuss expectations and perceptions of the campus with continuing students.

Part 2: Program

Student orientation programs must be (a) purposeful, (b) coherent, (c) based on or related to theories and knowledge of human development and learning characteristics, and (d) reflective of the demographic and developmental profiles of the student body.

The student orientation program must promote student development by encouraging such things as positive and realistic self-appraisal, intellectual development, appropriate personal and occupational choices, clarification of values, physical fitness, the ability to relate meaningfully and mutually with others, the capacity to engage in a personally satisfying and effective style of living, the capacity to appreciate cultural and esthetic differences, and the capacity to work independently and interdependently.

The student orientation program must assist students in overcoming specific personal, physical, or educational problems or skill deficiencies.

The student orientation program must identify environmental conditions that may negatively influence welfare and propose interventions that may neutralize such conditions or improve the environment.

The educational experience of students consists of both academic efforts in the classroom and developmental opportunities through student orientation efforts. Institutions must define the relative importance of these processes.

Essential components of an orientation program must include:

- **an introduction to both the academic and student life aspects of the institution; and**
- **structured opportunities for the interaction of new students with faculty, staff, and continuing students.**

These program components may be carried out through:

- summer, fall, and/or spring orientation (preclass experience), and orientation classes;
- on-site visits by new students to become familiar with physical facilities and setting;
- a comprehensive information program, including catalogs, bulletins, handbooks, films, and slide presentations, to assist students to understand and visualize the campus milieu, history, policies, regulations, requirements, expectations, and course offerings;
- structured activities for the purpose of stimulating interaction among new students, and between new students, continuing students, and faculty and staff members;
- placement and/or self-diagnostic measures to assist students in selection of appropriate courses and levels of courses;
- involvement of academic units, including qualified faculty, staff, and peer academic advisors for purposes of explaining academic programs and helping students develop educational plans; and
- registration for classes.

Part 3: Leadership and Management

(Institution level only. See General Standards)

Part 4: Organization and administration

Student orientation programs must develop its own set of policies and procedures that include a detailed description of the administrative process and an organizational chart showing the job functions and reporting relationships within and beyond the program.

The scope and structure of the administrative organization for orientation services should be governed by the size, nature, and complexity of the institution.

The orientation function should have, in written form, policies and procedures regarding the operation of the service. These should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

Part 5: Human Resources

The student orientation program must have adequate and qualified professional staff to fulfill its mission and to implement all aspects of the program. To be qualified, professional staff members must have a graduate degree in a field of study relevant to the particular job in question or must have an appropriate combination of education and experience. In any student orientation program in which there is a full-time director, that director must possess levels of education and/or professional experience beyond that of the staff to be supervised.

Preprofessional or support staff members employed in the student orientation programs must be qualified by relevant education and experience. Degree requirements, including both degree levels and subject matter, must be germane to the particular job responsibilities. Such staff members must be trained appropriately and supervised adequately by professional staff.

Paraprofessionals must be carefully selected, trained with respect to helping skills and institutional services and procedures, closely supervised, and evaluated regularly. Their compensation must be fair and any voluntary services must be recognized adequately. Paraprofessionals must recognize the limitations of their knowledge and skills and must refer students to appropriate professionals when the problems encountered warrant.

To ensure that professional staff members devote adequate time to professional duties, the student orientation program must have sufficient clerical and technical support staff. Such support must be of sufficient quantity and quality to accomplish the following kinds of activities: typing, filing, telephone and other receptionist duties, bookkeeping, maintaining student records, organizing resource materials, receiving students and making appointments, and handling routine correspondence.

Salary level and fringe benefits for staff must be commensurate with those for similar professional, preprofessional, and clerical positions at the institution and in the geographic area.

To ensure the existence of suitable and readily identifiable role models within the campus teaching and administrative ranks, staff employment profiles must reflect representation of categories of persons who comprise the student population. However, where student

bodies are predominantly nondisabled, of one race, sex, or religion, a diverse staffing pattern will enrich the teaching/administrative ranks and will demonstrate institutional commitment to fair employment practices.

The student orientation program must have a regular system of staff selection and evaluation, and must provide continuing professional development opportunities for staff including inservice training programs, participation in professional conferences, workshops, and other continuing education activities.

The competencies for professional staff members are usually gained through studies in counseling and guidance, college student personnel administration, or administration in higher education through at least the master's level. However, no restriction as to field of study is suggested, as the competencies and skills required may be obtained in a variety of disciplines.

The staff should include professional, technical, secretarial, and clerical personnel. The staff may also consist of preprofessional practicum or internship students at the graduate level and both paid and volunteer student staff.

Involvement of faculty and staff members, as well as trained students, is very important since orientation must have institution-wide support to be successful.

The analysis of individual staff qualifications should include:

- earned degrees,
- special training,
- experience,
- length of service,
- relevant research, and
- professional activities and other development.

The professional staff members (including staff members with other responsibilities) charged with the responsibility of designing and coordinating an orientation process, should be competent to:

- identify new student needs for the purpose of program development;
- formulate goals and objectives for the program;
- design, develop, and carry out appropriate levels of evaluation of the program and staff;
- interview, select, train, and supervise professional and student staff;
- promote interoffice cooperation and communicate the orientation process to other campus units;
- develop a budget and maintain fiscal responsibility for the orientation function; and
- conduct research and disseminate findings regarding the transition needs of new students.

The professional staff should possess the qualifications essential for carrying out the mission of orientation. These qualifications should include:

- appropriate educational background and professional experience;
- evidence of engagement in innovative service delivery and effective planning;
- participation in professional associations and professional development activities; and
- understanding and commitment to student development theories.

The number of full-time equivalent professional staff members should be adequate to meet the orientation goals of the institution. A master's degree in the area of counseling, or student services/development (including a practicum in orientation or closely related area), is recommended.

The academic preparation of professional orientation staff members should include courses in counseling theory, testing and measurement, learning theory, educational psychology, organizational psychology, group processes, effective communication, and management.

The orientation professional should also have substantial practical work experience in areas such as housing, commuter affairs, campus activities, career planning, advising, counseling service, admissions, and orientation. This experience may have been acquired through internships, volunteer work, or paid employment.

There should be sufficient technical, secretarial, and clerical staff to enable the office to attain its stated goals, and to provide supportive services to professional staff members engaged in professional tasks.

Preprofessional staff members should come from the academic program in counseling, student services/development areas, or from their equivalents on a given campus. They should be adequately supervised by professional staff.

Part-time student employees and volunteers may be used with supervision. Student staff members and volunteers should receive training in and should be able to demonstrate leadership, resourcefulness, empathy, creativity, organizational and planning skills, information-giving skills, and interpersonal skills.

The student staff selected for leadership roles should be currently enrolled and selected for their ability to represent the campus culture from a peer perspective. The ratio of student leaders to new students should be sufficiently low for effective personal interaction time.

Part 6: Funding

The student orientation program must have funding sufficient to carry out its mission and to support the following, where applicable: staff salaries; purchase and maintenance of office furnishing, supplies, materials, and equipment, including current technology; phone and postage costs; printing and media costs; institutional memberships in appropriate professional organizations; relevant subscriptions and necessary library resources; attendance at professional association meetings, conferences, and workshops; and other professional development activities. In addition to institutional funding commitment through general funds, other funding sources may be considered, including: state appropriations, student fees, user fees, donations and contributions, fines, concession and store sales, rentals, and dues.

Money from the general fund should be allocated to underwrite orientation expenses. Overnight programs may require the students and parents to stay on campus. There is justification for recovering room and board costs directly from participants. However, such a fee should not be so large as to serve as a deterrent to attendance for students of modest financial means.

Part 7: Facilities

The student orientation program must be provided adequate facilities to fulfill its mission. As applicable, the facilities for student orientation programs must include, or the program must have access to, the following: private offices or private spaces for counseling, interviewing, or other meetings of a confidential nature; office, reception, and storage space sufficient to accommodate assigned staff, supplies, equipment, library resources, and machinery; and conference room or meeting space. All facilities must be accessible to disabled persons and must be in compliance with relevant federal, state, and local health and safety requirements.

Orientation functions may use a variety of physical spaces to effectively promote programs, services, and activities. Cooperation from within the campus community is necessary to provide appropriate facilities. Where justified, a single office location, housing the staff and insuring adequate work space, should be centrally located and attractive. The professional office space should include room for reception areas, information dissemination facilities, individual private offices, and group meeting and work space.

Part 8: Legal Responsibilities

Staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to relevant civil and criminal laws and must be responsible for ensuring that the institution fulfills its legal obligations. Staff members in student orientation programs must be well versed in those obligations

and limitations imposed on the operation of student orientation programs by local, state, and federal constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and common law, and by institutional policy. They must utilize appropriate policies and practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. The institution must provide access to legal advice to professional staff as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

Part 9: Equal Opportunity, Access, and Affirmative Action

The student orientation program must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws in all activities. The program must ensure that its services and facilities are accessible to and provide hours of operation that respond to the needs of special student populations, including traditionally under-represented, evening, part-time, and commuter students.

Personnel policies shall not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, age, national origin and/or handicap. In hiring and promotion policies, student services professionals must take affirmative action that strives to remedy significant staffing imbalance, particularly when resulting from past discriminatory practices. The student orientation program must seek to identify, prevent and/or remedy other discriminatory practices.

Part 10: Campus and Community Relations

The student orientation program must maintain good relations with relevant campus offices and external agencies, which necessarily requires regular identification of the offices with whom such relationships are critical.

Student orientation should be an institution-wide program that systematically involves student affairs agencies, academic affairs agencies, and administrative agencies, such as campus police, physical plant, and business office.

The orientation program office should coordinate information relating to other services on campus. These services should, in turn, provide the media and human resources necessary to accomplish the transmission of information.

Part 11: Multi-Cultural Programs and Services

The institution's student orientation program must provide to members of its majority and minority cultures educational efforts that focus on awareness of cultural differences, self-assessment of possible prejudices, and desirable behavior changes.

The student orientation program must provide educational programs that help minority students identify their unique needs, prioritize those

needs, and meet them to the degree that numbers of students, facilities, and resources permit. The program must orient minority students to the culture of the institution and promote and deepen their understanding of their own culture and heritage.

Part 12. Ethics

All persons involved in the provision of student orientation programs to students must maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior. Student orientation program staff members must develop and adopt standards of ethical practice addressing the unique problems that face personnel in that area. The standards must be published and reviewed by all concerned. In the formulation of those standards, ethical standards statements previously adopted by the profession at large or relevant professional associations may be of assistance and must be considered.

Certain ethical obligations apply to all individuals employed in student orientation programs, for example: All staff members must ensure that confidentiality is maintained with respect to all communications and records considered confidential. Unless written permission is given by the student, information disclosed in individual counseling sessions must remain confidential. In addition, all requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment) must be complied with and information contained in students' educational records must not be disclosed to third parties without appropriate consent, unless one of the relevant statutory exceptions applies. A similar dedication to privacy and confidentiality must be applied to research data concerning individuals.

All staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subjects policy and in any other institutional policy addressing ethical practice.

All staff members must ensure that students are provided access to services on a fair and equitable basis. All staff members must avoid any personal conflict of interest so they can deal objectively and impartially with persons within and outside the institution. In many instances, the appearance of a conflict of interest can be as damaging as an actual conflict. Whenever handling funds, all staff must ensure that such funds are handled in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures.

Staff members must not participate in any form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined to include sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, as well as other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature if "(l) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress, or any other outcome of an official nature, (2) . . . is used as the basis for such decisions or outcomes. . . (3) . . . has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment."

[29 Code of Federal Regulations, C.F.R., Section 1604.11 (a).]

All staff members must recognize the limits of their training, expertise, and competence and must refer students in need of further expertise to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

Orientation staff members must ensure that institutional goals, services, programs, and policies are accurately presented to the public, students, prospective students, and colleagues.

Orientation staff members must respect the students' rights to privacy and share information about individuals only in accordance with institutional and federal policy, or when given permission by the student, or when required to prevent personal harm or harm to others.

Personnel must provide adequate information to students prior to and following any test administration.

Part 13: Evaluation

There must be systematic and regular research on and evaluation of the overall institutional student services/development program and the student orientation program to determine whether the educational goals and the needs of students are being met. Although methods of evaluation may vary, they must utilize both quantitative and qualitative measures. Data collected must include responses from students and other significant constituencies. Results of these regular evaluations must be used in revising and improving the program goals and implementation.

Evaluation of student and institutional needs, goals, objectives, and the effectiveness of programs, services, and activities should occur on a periodic basis, at least every five years.

Surveys and questionnaires should solicit information for periodic evaluation of student and institutional needs.

Concurrent studies and follow-up studies should be used to determine program and staff effectiveness. New student adjustment and retention should be included as variables for the studies. The results of such evaluations may be made available to students, faculty, staff, and external users.

A representative cross-section of appropriate people from the campus community should be involved in periodic review of goals and objectives.

About The Authors

Jimmy W. Abraham

Jimmy W. Abraham is Associate Dean of Student Services at Mississippi State University, serves as Director of Orientation, and has published articles on orientation. He has been the Mississippi chairperson for Region VI of NODA, and has attended and presented at NODA conferences. Abraham received his B.S. (1975) and M.Ed. (1977) degrees from Mississippi State University, and his Ph.D. (1985) from the University of Mississippi. His first year was such a good experience that he decided to make higher education administration his career choice.

Diane M. Austin

Diane M. Austin is Associate Dean of Student Affairs/New Student Programs at Bentley College. She has also served as Associate Director of Counseling at Bentley, and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Paul Smith's College. Her NODA activities include serving as historian (1988-present), vice-president (1984-86), national membership chair (1981-84), and a member of the Board of Directors (1980-1983). Austin received her B.A. (1973) and M.A. (1976) degrees from SUNY Plattsburgh.

Betsy O. Barefoot

Betsy Barefoot is Co-Director of Research and Publications for the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina. She is editor or co-editor of all FYE publications, and author of several publications and monographs on the freshman year experience. Barefoot received her A.B. (1976) degree from Duke University, and her M.Ed. (1987) and Ed.D. (1992) degrees from the College of William and Mary. She recalls two "freshman years" at Duke University, the first when she initially enrolled, and the second when she came back to complete her degree after a ten year "stopout."

Gary Biller

Gary Biller is Vice-President for Student Affairs at Dickinson State University, North Dakota. He received his B.S (1975) and M.S. (1976) degrees at Oklahoma State University, and his Ph.D. (1986) from the University of Kansas. He has served as Director of Orientation at Wichita State University, and his NODA activities include serving as a member of the NODA Board of Directors (1987-90), and editor of the *Orientation*

Review (1990-1992). From his first year in college, he remembers a fifth-year senior who offered to show him what he "really needed to know" instead of attending his orientation class. They both finished their degree programs in the same year!

Richard Brackin

Richard Brackin is Assistant to the Dean and Director of Orientation at Ohio University. He has served as a faculty member, admissions director, academic administrator, and orientation director. His NODA involvement includes serving on the Board of Directors (1983-86), Director of Regions (1986-89), and Editor Apparent *First Timer's Handbook* (1994). Brackin received his B.S.Ed. (1955) from Capital University, and his M.Ed. (1965) and Ph.D. (1976) degrees from Ohio University. As a first year student, he remembers his dismay upon learning that his housing assignment was at a funeral home, but he survived anyway with much "weeping and gnashing of teeth" over the first few weeks.

Les P. Cook

Les Cook currently serves as the Assistant Director of Admissions at Salt Lake Community College where he has been instrumental in the development of orientation programs. He serves as the Membership Chair for the National Orientation Directors Association, is on the Board of Directors, and has served as the two-year college caucus co-chair. Les attended Utah State University where he completed both his bachelor's and master's degrees. Presently, Les is in the final stages of coursework for a doctorate in educational leadership.

Michael Dannells

Michael Dannells is Associate Professor, Counseling and Educational Psychology at Kansas State University. He also served as Director of New Student Programs at Northern Arizona University. He has published and written extensively about orientation. Dannells received his B.S. (1971) degree from Bradley University, and his Ph.D. (1978) from the University of Iowa. From his freshman year, he recalls being asked to read two very hefty books in preparation for summer orientation, which he still has, and which he still hasn't read!

Louis Fox

Louis Fox is the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Education at the University of Washington. He serves on the NODA Board and has hosted two NODA regional conferences. Fox received his A.B. (1978) degree from Kenyon college, his M.A. (1985) from the University of Washington, and is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the University of Washington. During his freshman year, he alleges that he tried to drink all the beer in the state of Ohio, and almost succeeded!

John N. Gardner

John N. Gardner is Director and founder of The Freshman Year Experience program and professor of library science at the University of South Carolina. He has published extensively in the fields of orientation, including five different freshman seminar textbooks (with Jerome Jewler) and *The Freshman Year Experience* (with M. Lee Upcraft). He has presented at NODA conferences, and developed a strong partnership between The Freshman Year Experience program and NODA. Gardner received his B.A. (1965) degree from Marietta College, his M.A. (1967) from Purdue University, and honorary doctorates from Marietta College, Baldwin

Wallace College, and Bridgewater State College. His miserable freshman year, including a 0.60 GPA in his first semester was the motivating factor in dedicating his life's work on behalf of the freshman year experience.

David Hansen

David Hansen is Assistant Vice-President for Student Development at the University of Nevada, Reno. He has also served as Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Enrollment Planning. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of NODA (1979-82), vice-president (1982-84), and president (1984-86). Hansen received his B.A. (1971) and M.Ed. (1973) degrees from Slippery Rock State College, and his Ed.D. (1985) from the University of Nevada, Reno. From his freshman year, he vividly recalls sitting with 600 other freshmen at an opening orientation convocation in which a dean told them that only one out of four students would graduate and asked, "Will you be that *one* successful student?"

Charlene Hager Harrison

Charlene Hager Harrison is the Director of the Center for Adult Learner Services at Penn State University. She has also served as the Director of the Campus Life Assistance Center and Off-Campus Programs at PSU. She has published articles on orientation and adult learners, and received the NODA Publications Competition Award of Excellence. Harrison received her B.A. (1964) and M.A. (1965) degrees from the University of Michigan. During her freshman year, she lived in a triple room with two other women who dropped out, and wonders if it was the large university, the triple room, or her influence that led to their demise.

Bonita C. Jacobs

Bonita C. Jacobs is Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Student Development at Western Carolina University. She has also served as Director of Residence Life, and Coordinator of Residence Life at Stephen F. Austin University. She has published on many orientation issues, and served NODA in many capacities, including program chair of the national conference (1993), member of the Strategic Planning Committee (1992-93), chair, Special Projects Committee (1992-93), and a member of the NODA Board of Directors (1991-present). Jacobs received her B.A. (1971) and M.Ed. (1973) degrees from Stephen F. Austin University, and her Ph.D. (1985) from Texas A & M University. From her freshman year, she remembers early morning classes and ballroom-style registration, which made her more stubborn and more patient.

Michaelann Jundt

Michaelann Jundt is Director of Orientation and New Student Services at the University of Washington. She has served as the NODA Region I Coordinator, and is a member of the 1994 NODA Conference Committee. Jundt received her B.A. (1990) from the University of Washington. Her most memorable recollection of her freshman year is her roommate's infatuation with Mick Jagger and speed, preferably together!

Gary L. Kramer

Gary L. Kramer is Associate Dean of Admissions and Records and Professor of Educational Psychology at Brigham Young University. He also served as Dean of Students and chair of the university orientation committee, and has published several articles on orientation, academic advising, and the application of technology to higher education. Kramer received his Ph.D. (1977) from Oregon State University.

Roger Morris

Roger Morris is the Associate Director of Student Development at the University of Oregon. He has been active in orientation programs for twelve years at two different institutions. His NODA involvement includes serving as a member of the Board of Directors (1985-88), regional coordinator (1986-92), and is hosting the 1994 national conference in Portland. Morris received his B.A. (1977) from George Fox College and his M.Ed. (1981) from Oregon State University. He says he really didn't have much of a freshman year, because he commuted and began college during the winter term. It wasn't until he transferred to another institution that he felt "connected" to the campus.

Richard H. Mullendore

Richard H. Mullendore is Associate Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He is very active in the National Orientation Directors Association serving as president (1990-1992), national conference program chair (1987) and the NODA Board of Directors (1987 to present). Over the past two decades, he has worked as a student affairs administrator, part-time faculty member, and retention consultant. He has published numerous articles on orientation, retention, and professional standards. Mullendore received his B.A. degree (1970) from Bradley University, his M.S. (1975) from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and his Ph.D. (1980) from Michigan State University. He describes his freshman year as mostly social, with occasional forays into classes taught in huge auditoriums!

C. Gregory Sharer

C. Gregory Sharer is Assistant Director of Orientation at the University of Maryland at College Park, and also worked with orientation at SUNY Albany. He is active in NODA, including helping to develop the *NODA Data Bank*. Sharer received his B.A. (1985) and M.S. (1988) degrees from SUNY Albany. He remembers spending a lot of time in his first semester in a hospital emergency room with a roommate who cut his head diving into the SUNY Quad fountain.

Becky F. Smith

Becky F. Smith is Associate Dean of Student Development at Otterbein College. She has also served as Campus Center Director and Coordinator of Student Activities. She is currently president of the National Orientation Directors Association, and has served as NODA Director of Regions (1989-1992), NODA Regional Coordinator (1988-89), NODA Conference Program Committee (1989), and NODA Board of Directors (1986-89). Smith received her B.A. (1981) degree from Otterbein College and her M.A. (1984) from Bowling Green State University. From her freshman year, she fondly remembers a caring academic adviser who wanted her to succeed in college and made a real difference in her life.

Barry G. Stearns

Barry G. Stearns has been Coordinator of Orientation and Advising Programs at Lansing Community College since 1966. He has been a member of NODA since 1973, has served on the NODA Board of Directors (1977-1980), was the national conference co-host in 1989, and was regional coordinator (1983-88). Stearns received his B.A.E. (1963) and M.Ed. degrees from the University of Florida.

Gerry Strumpf

Gerry Strumpf is Director of Orientation at the University of Maryland at College Park. She has published articles on orientation, and is the co-editor of the *NODA Data Bank*. Her other NODA activities include serving as the association representative on the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs. Strumpf received her B.A. (1973) and M.Ed. (1973) degrees from the University of South Carolina, and her Ph.D. (1990) from the University of Maryland, College Park. She recalls her first night at college when her roommate went out with the vice-president of the student government. She felt *very* alone!

M. Lee Upcraft

M. Lee Upcraft is Assistant Vice-President for Student Affairs, Affiliate Professor of Education, Research Affiliate in the Center for the Study of Higher Education, and Senior Researcher in the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at The Pennsylvania State University. He also serves as the Associate Editor of the Jossey-Bass *New Directions for Student Services* sourcebooks. He has conducted research and published extensively in the field of new students and orientation, including *Orienting Students to College* and *The Freshman Year Experience* with John N. Gardner. Upcraft received his B.A. (1960) and M.A. (1961) degrees from SUNY Albany, and his Ph.D. (1967) from Michigan State University. He describes his freshman year as a social and academic calamity, which probably accounts for his obsessive interest in the first year experience!

James G. Zakely

James G. Zakely is Director of Academic Advising at the University of Northern Colorado, and has directed orientation at both Northern Colorado and the University of Utah. He has served NODA in many capacities, including President (1988-1990), Board of Directors (1981-82, 1984-87), and national conference host, 1981. Zakely received his A.A. degree (1970) from Mesa Community College, his B.S. (1975) from Colorado State University, his M.S. (1977) from Western Illinois University, and is working on his Ph.D. from Colorado State University. From his freshman year he remembers registering alphabetically (and therefore last), and wondering if he would forever be last and have to take what was left!

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